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Jim Bartlett

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U.S. Border Patrol agents have long faced danger. Now, they're targets as more illegals who head North come packing. See story, page 36.

OMEGA PROVING GROUND

M96 CARBINE by Peter G. Kokalis

Robinson Armament Company's M96 Expeditionary rifle has, since its introduction a year ago, realized unparalleled success and unprecedented demand. Kokalis tells you why.

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2001: A SHOT ODYSSEY by Frank W. James

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Believe in doing the world a favor? Provide the FBI with information resulting in the arrest or conviction of Usama bin Laden and you'll enjoy a nice payday to boot.

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Al J. Venter

BARRETT'S ULTIMATE BIG BORE by Peter G. Kokalis

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Want to jet off to the Ukraine on a bare-knuckle tour, meet interesting military people, fire their weapons and fly their aircraft? Your reservation's waiting — if you're willing to part with *beaucoup* bucks.

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Peter G. Kokalis

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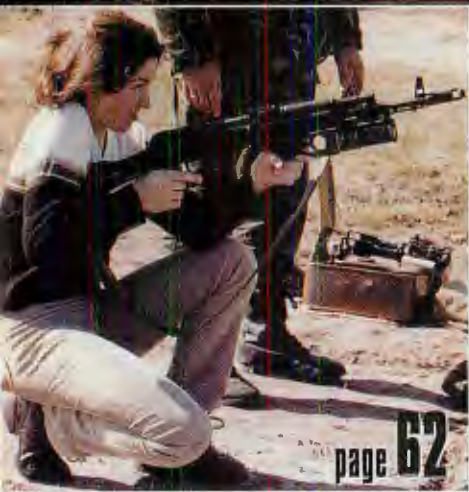


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COMBAT SNIPER

by John Culbertson

Return to Vietnam for a first-look tour of Culbertson's upcoming book, *13-Cent Killers: The 5th Marine Sniper Platoon in Vietnam, 1966-68*.

KAYAK'S FINAL JOURNEY Part II

by Cmdr. Chip Beck, USNR (Ret.)

Deep into his quest to locate George Bacon's grave in far-off Angola, the author finds out it's dangerous to be a "civilian." CIA might as well have said, "Georgie, we never knew ya."

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courtesy Bill Bagwell

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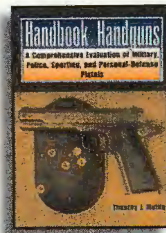


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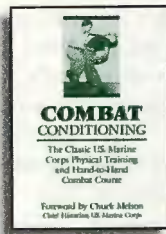


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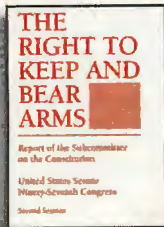
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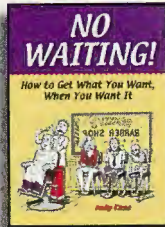


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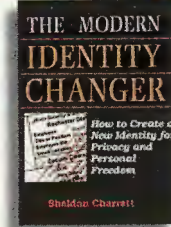


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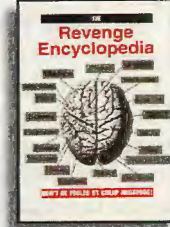


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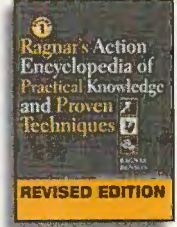


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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Media Gun Bias

(The following is reprinted from *NRA-ILA Fax Alert*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030; phone: 800-392-8683; fax: 703-267-3918; website: www.NRAILA.org.)

A recent study by the Media Research Center (MRC) documents the palpable anti-gun bias of the major television networks in reporting firearm-related news. A study released by the MRC last year examined 653 morning and evening news stories from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1999, and found that stories advocating gun control on ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC outpaced those opposing by a ratio of nearly 10 to 1. The recent study examined the same period, and showed that the bias advocating more restrictions on law-abiding gun owners is accompanied by an apparent unwillingness to cover stories that the pro-Second Amendment community would like to see.

For example, over the past several years, when NRA spokesmen had been invited to comment on the debate over gun control on news programs, they regularly pointed out the failure of the Clinton-Gore Administration to prosecute armed violent felons. But the MRC study showed that TV reporters mentioned the drop in federal prosecutions under Clinton only eight times during the period studied. Similarly, NRA has been promoting real crime-fighting programs such as the "Project Exile: prosecution model, which originated in Richmond, Va., for several years. The networks, however, mentioned this program a mere three times over the period studied. "Project Exile" — a cooperative effort among local, state,

and federal law enforcement prosecutors — targets violent felons who violate firearm laws, seeks the most stringent penalties available, and has been credited with a dramatic reduction in Richmond's violent gun-related crime.

The lawful, defensive use of firearms by law-abiding citizens is a subject that has also been widely ignored, according to the MRC. Although award-winning criminologist Gary Kleck has estimated that firearms are used as often as 2.5 million times a year for protection, the networks reported such acts only 12 times out of the 653 firearm-related stories covered.

And while NRA constantly points out that passing new restrictions on law-abiding gun owners does nothing to reduce crime, especially in light of the countless laws that are violated in every high-profile shooting, this argument was mentioned only five times over the study period.

This latest study complements last year's study, and supports another MRC study released in 1994. The 1994 study focused solely on evening news programs from 1 December 1991 to 30 November 1993, and found that 62% of the 197 stories examined devoted substantially more time to anti-gun arguments that pro-gun. It also found that news commentators who endorsed gun control outnumbered those opposed by nearly 2 to 1, and the anti-gun bias was even more distinct than the story concerned the Brady Bill, expanding to 3 to 1 against the pro-Second Amendment view.

If you would like more information on the MRC and its recent study, go to its website at www.mrc.org.

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (USPS 525-810, ISSN 0145-6784), May 2001, Volume 26, Number 5, is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Inc., 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340. Periodicals Postage is paid at Boulder, CO and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, POB 348, Mt Morris, IL 61054-0348 or call 1-800-877-5207. U.S. and APO-FPO subscription rate for twelve monthly issues \$29.95. Canada add \$10.00/yr. additional postage (includes GST tax registration business number: 12847 6249 RT). All other countries add \$21.00 U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single Issue Price — U.S.: \$4.99; United Kingdom: £2.60; Canada: \$5.99. PRINTED IN THE USA.

CONTRIBUTORS: Manuscripts, photographs or drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to Articles Editor, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340, and cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Any material accepted is subject to such revision as is necessary to meet the editorial requirements of SOF. All manuscripts must be typed double-spaced. All photographs must be credited and be accurately identified. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication. Editorial office phone number is 303-449-3750.

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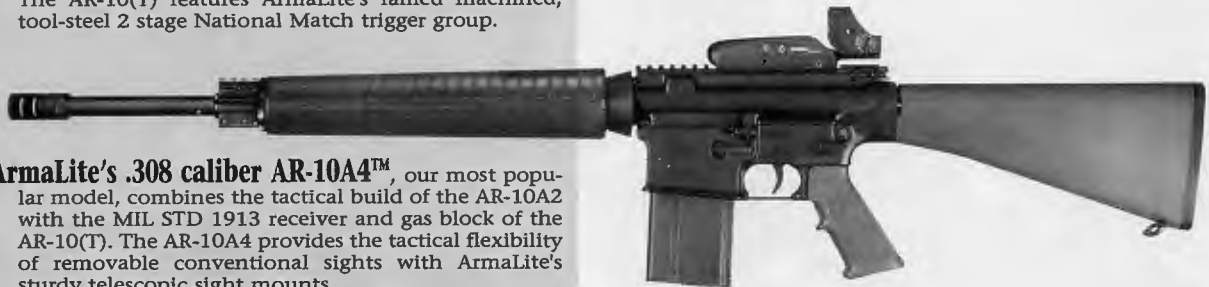
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Swiss Guards

A member of my family and subscriber to SOF would like to know:

- 1: Who are the Swiss Guards?
- 2: Whom are they made up of?
- 3: What is their purpose?

Susan Andrews
via e-mail

You could accurately call the Swiss Guards one of the world's oldest merc or bodyguard outfits. For hundreds of years this elite cadre of actual Swiss troops has been hired to attend to the personal security of the Roman Catholic Pope. Although their job description necessarily entails a certain amount of high-profile ceremonial duty, they are carefully selected, well-trained and equipped — and one of the world's premier personal security details.

Swapping Iron



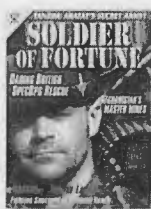
I own a Heckler & Koch 91 and have the opportunity to trade it for a Galil AR .308 and a few dollars more. My question is, would it be a mistake to trade my H&K 91 for a Galil AR and why? I loved the article "M16 Millennium Modifications" (March '01).

William
via e-mail

Both rifles are serious iron, but only you have the information at your disposal to decide which is the one you really want. Which rifle is in the best condition? Which way was the "few dollars more" going to flow? Is there something about the H&K you don't like? Which rifle physically fits you better? Do you reload your ammo? Why does the guy with the Galil want your H&K? How many bazillion rounds do you hope to put through the rifle before you

retire it? There are so many variables, only you can make the decision. If this editor were deciding, in .308 I'd probably stick to the H&K. In .223 I might opt for a Galil over the H&K 93 — but everybody's situation and requirements are different. That's why so many differing yet quality designs are on the market.

Politically Incorrect



On page 47 of the January issue [in a story regarding Thunder Ranch] there is a photo of a "politically incorrect [area]" sign. I read it and laughed like hell! It was so well put together, I found myself wanting one (or two or three).

Do you know whom I could contact to obtain one of those signs? If you do, please advise. Actually, it's time we turned this P.C. horseshit around and got back to calling things and people by their correct names.

T.W. Lewis
San Bernardino, California

Successful SEALs



I noticed in the April 2001 SOF, under the article "SEALs: Continued Professionalism," there is no mention of Richard Marcinko or his series of adventure novels. He has been very successful with his books. I was curious why he was not mentioned in the article.

Anthony Zmiljewski
via e-mail

Former SEALs, as a group, have been just as hard-charging in civilian life as in the service, thus there are simply far too

many blessed with success to mention them all. Marcinko and his numerous books have been featured in SOF many times over the years.

If Too Good To Be True ...



I am responding to the piece written by Daniel S. Bones ("I Was There," SOF, March '01). My own background: I am an ex-South African soldier, I served in the Marine Corps, the Department of Naval Counter-Intelligence, Infantry, and Commandos of the SADF. After my full time service I have worked for EO, Grey Security et al. in various parts of the world. I have had +/- 15 years of continuous service. I am now trying out a more peaceful "civvie" life here in the States.

My comments regarding Mr. Bones' piece are: Before entering into any freelance military-type work, do your research well. It is essential not just to know lots about where you are going and why, but even more so know for whom and with whom. The right company and teammates make or break a job. Another important factor is to expect, train and prepare yourself for the worst that can happen. Lay your own plans for medical aid, evac, medevac, security, health, supply and finance and insurance. There are many things you can do to make yourself more self-reliant.

Don't believe the recruitment hype — that is all it is. When it comes out true, it is the exception rather than the rule. To me, it sounded like the author expected a soft tour (a holiday rest camp), when you consider his comment, "the area, of course, has no nightlife, women or booze ..." As far as I know, when you sign up for fighting wages (\$42,000 in this case) you expect fighting conditions. Especially in Third

Continued on page 14



WEAPON TESTS AND EVALUATIONS

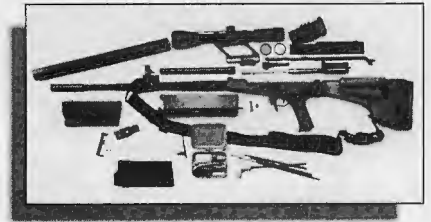
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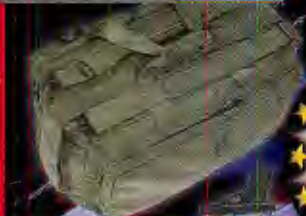


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World and East Bloc countries, do not expect First World luxuries such as local nightlife after hours! With luck you could end up in a "Club" where most of the patrons are clutching AKs...

But most of all, be aware and gather info constantly, evaluate it and act on it. Remember, you put your life on the line as soon as you board the aircraft. You must look after yourself, no one else will — especially the respective company will have all the legal deniability built in to your "contract" and SOPs! Look out for #1, if you want to spend your cash! I could go on a lot more and list examples in detail, but I think I got the point across.

Keep up the good work.

Phillip J. Nel

Perks Where You Find Them

I too was employed by that Texas Corporation, during the same time in question, on the same team as "Daniel S. Bones." I would not contradict what he said about the administrative staff. Actually, I thought he was very kind in his evaluation of them. Nor would I deny the working conditions, actually it got to be 130 degrees in the shade (but who was counting?).

What I would take exception with is his estimation of our co-workers, the female population, and booze. I will grant you that in the bell curve of human existence there are those who are detestable (we had some of those), the colorfully inept (we had some of those), and then we had those who, like "Daniel," were men of character and caliber. I have the privilege of calling some of those guys my friends and count myself richer because of it. If one desired the comfort of female companionship one could find it. Matter of fact, one of our team members married a young lady (in the most honorable sense of the word) he met locally.

Then there is booze. One of our team members met the criteria for a liquor license, built a bar (a real nice one) in the villa and entertained his teammates and other guards. Or one could go downtown to the major hotels and pay real significant amounts of money for a libation of choice.

Lastly, there was much to do in our free time (what little there was of it). I was part of a small group of cavaliers who went snorkeling, scuba diving, and tasting the offerings of first-class beachside resorts. We toured the national

museums and explored the back alleys of the old market in search of that unique item to send home. We were constantly on the watch for something new to see and explore and seldom were we without something to do.

I guess it boils down to the moral of the boobytrap: Just because you don't see it doesn't mean it isn't there.

My regards to "Daniel," wherever he is.

Hank in Killeen

Foreign G.I.s?

I came across an issue of *SOF* magazine early this year through a friend. I think it is a very interesting and bold magazine. I personally haven't been in the military but I admire soldiers and the military in general. My dream is to serve in the army, even if just briefly.

Is there any way I can apply for military training in the U.S., although I am not a U.S. citizen?

Peterson K. Mwit
via e-mail from UK

Can you put me in contact with where I can volunteer to do some military service? I have served for a year in the British Territorial Army and want to travel and get some foreign service under my belt.

Robert Stewart

Qualified foreign nationals are accepted into U.S. military service. You have a good chance of getting an overseas assignment such as Korea or Bosnia. We are not aware of any military which accepts foreign nationals for terms as short as one year. Suggest you check out www.goarmy.com on the web for what the Army program presently is.

Hats Off to Jim



Hats off to Jim Mitchell, who wrote "Con #2" in the February 2001 issue. This guy hit the nail on the head. You hard-as-nails tough guys at *SOF* ought to go and set at

that man's knee and learn something. There are a few of us out here who think and feel the same way. I called NRA's Jim Baird (a former Marine) and

he gave me some song and dance about how important it is that the NRA be a member of the UN - NGO. I told him, "I don't think sleeping with the enemy is a plan." This Marine will not submit to a plan like that. One last question, do you tough guys at *SOF* sit or squat?

Harley Frisby
Gold Beach, Oregon

The point of having the NRA as an NGO is not so they can sleep with the enemy, rather that we have a man at the enemy's table. On your other point, the only protocol we have is to never face into the wind.

Thanks For The Bittersweet Memories

There are things you remember and things you'd prefer to forget. Col. Peck ("Low Plains Drifter," *SOF* February & March '01) has a writing style and wit that make the tough memories come alive and yet not hurt. I couldn't help but break into smiles as I read the February and now the March installments of his article. Bravo! Keep on keepin' on.

John Dellinger
Tucson, Arizona

Kudos to Krott



I first subscribed to *SOF* primarily because I appreciated the articles by Rob Krott. He's a whip-song writer, a dedicated reporter whose work inspired my own pursuit of a career in foreign correspondence.

Krott's recent dispatches from Colombia offered finely detailed and much needed insight about U.S.-funded efforts in that region. His coverage kept me well informed, challenging me to think critically and seriously about the effectiveness of our efforts in that war-torn country. I appreciate the information. Thanks for the articles.

Joshua Lipton

Pirates

Just got back from a sailing trip to the northern Moluccas (Sulawesi,

Halmahera) and we heard reports of pirates in those waters. Never actually saw any pirates but we did get a few warning shots across our bow when we pulled up to a Christian village that had been the victim of a low-level jihad a few months earlier. I suppose our catamaran looked pretty sleathy and the round aluminum bowsprit did a pretty good imitation of a cannon of some sort. Anyway, things turned out all right when we explained in our broken Bahasa we had come to surf, not shoot.

A friend of mine said you may have run a story on modern-day piracy recently. If so, how do I get a copy? If not, do you know where I could find any first-hand accounts?

Steve Barilotti



We ran a three-part series on modern-day piracy in the March, April and May 2000 issues. Back issues are available at \$5 each from: SOF Back Issues Dept., 5735 E.

Arapahoe Ave. #A5, Boulder, CO 80303; online at www.sofmag.com or you can phone 1-800-800-7630 for credit-card orders.

Mug-abe



It is with great interest that I follow your coverage of the situation in Zimbabwe. Having returned in late August from my second safari in six years, I can only agree with your assessment of the situation. Having first-hand experience with the so-called "war vets," it clearly doesn't take a brain surgeon to see that most of these stoned punks were not even breast feeding by the time the war was over. As far as the real war vets are concerned ... they seem to wish to go home, but are rightfully afraid of Mugabe and his Presidential Guard. It's a crying shame what is happening to farmers, wildlife and the natural splendor of this country, not to mention the loss of another hunting spot. I only wish that Mugabe and some "war vets" were along the day my Cape Buffalo charged. Crossfire can be a bitch.

Eric Snyder
Bellville, Ohio

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I Was There

by Rob Krott

Welcome To The Real World, Lieutenant



courtesy author

“Hey, man, I know it’s cold and miserable, but we’re infantry officers. This is what it’s all about. I mean, this is as close to a war as you can get right now. Look, this is prime infiltration and ambush weather. Tonight we’re gonna go out, set up our Claymores, and maybe get to kill some people,” I said. One of my patrol RTOs overheard my last comment as he walked up to coordinate radio watch with my RTO and said, “Excellent, totally excellent, El-Teel!” But my little speech on organized group homicide as a contact sport didn’t do much to bolster the spirits or improve the decidedly negative attitude of Vinnie.

Vinnie was the lieutenant (from the 1121st Infantry battalion) straphanging with my platoon so he could learn to run recon and ambush patrols in the Korean DMZ. Vinnie just mumbled something else about military intelligence and maybe the lack of it in a certain “Buffalo” platoon leader.

It was June 1986 and U.S. forces still played a small but meaningful role in the active defense of the Republic of Korea. I was leading platoon-sized patrol base operations in the DMZ as an infantry first lieutenant with Alpha Company,

1/17 Infantry, “The Buffaloes” (since redesignated 5/20th Sykes Regulars), I was also leading one of my platoon’s three patrols because of a shortage of capable and motivated E-5 promotables and above. It didn’t matter that I had two corporals (one a tabbed Ranger right out of the batt) who were head and shoulders above most of the company’s E-6s.

The regulation said “E-6 or E-5 (promotable) with a waiver.” Once again a company grade officer wasn’t permitted to make a judgment call based on the intimate knowledge of his men’s abilities. The majority of my platoon was under 20 years of age. Only my platoon sergeant, who stayed in the rear handling beans and bullets, and one of my squad/patrol leaders was older than my 23 years. In my platoon I had 14 18-year-olds and even a couple of 17-year olds fresh from Infantry OSUT, Fort Benning, Ga. Oh, yeah. Lucky me.

By SOP, I inserted my platoon by patrols, usually taking the first one in myself. This way we’d insert in three separate elements. The other two patrols were led by Staff Sergeant Dauzat, a very capable “leg” Ranger (you know he must’ve caught hell in the course) and Sergeant (E-5P)

(left) The author, commanding Guard Post Collier, a firebase 500 meters from North Korea. Weapon is an M21 with ART.
 (right) "North Joes" — not exactly happy. But what could you expect, living in North Korea?

Metzger — whom I'd borrowed from another platoon. Metzger had actually been an "acting" platoon sergeant, and a damned good one, for several months. They would link-up with me at our patrol base. From there we'd run day recons and night ambush patrols. Since each battalion in the 2nd Infantry Division spent only three months on the "Z" before another unit rotated up we also had to train our replacement patrol leaders. The 1/21st Infantry followed us in rotation and on one of my last patrols I was to train a second lieutenant from the 1121st and get him certified before his unit rotated up north to replace us. The trainee patrol leader would straphang on one patrol and then "lead" a patrol next time out, while the "real" patrol leader held his hand. The last time I'd "certified" a patrol leader it was Sergeant First Class Rocky Simpson, a friend of mine, doing the straphanging. Rocky had scored confirmed kills as an E-4 patrol leader on a previous tour in the ROK over 10 years previously. So it was going to be a real walk in the sun, or so we thought, until we made contact on our way to secure our ambush position. It was an adrenaline-filled and thoroughly fucked-up night, playing cat and mouse with a North Korean infiltrator and getting lit up by North Korean searchlights.



courtesy author

Binos And Butt-Bandits

Vinnie, a West Point graduate, arrived fresh from Ranger School to his assignment with the 1/21st Infantry. He had straphanged on one uneventful patrol in the usual hot, humid 90-degree DMZ weather. Our patrol base for Vinnie's certification patrol was a leafy-foliaged hilltop equidistant from the "firebases" at Guard Post Collier and Guard Post Ouellete rather unimaginatively nicknamed

Continued on page 87

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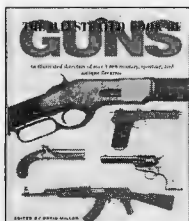
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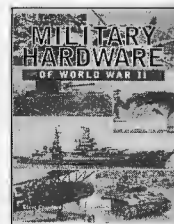
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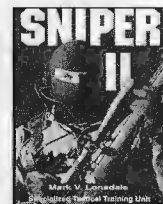
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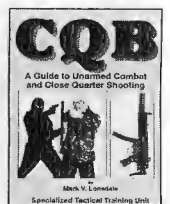
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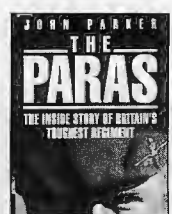
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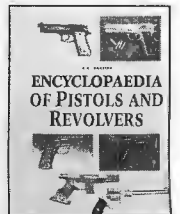
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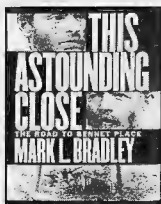
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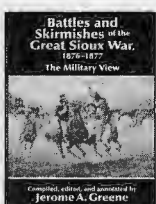
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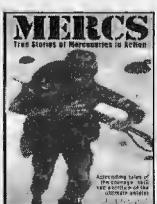
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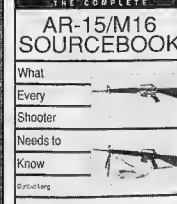
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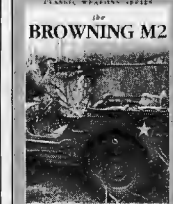
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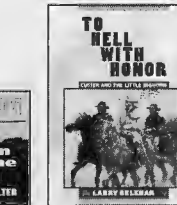
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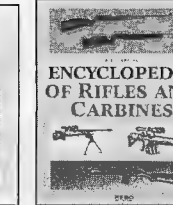
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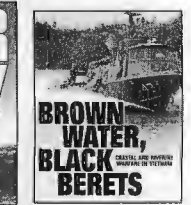
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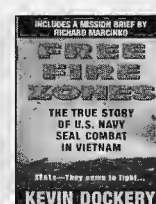
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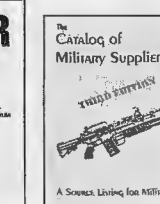
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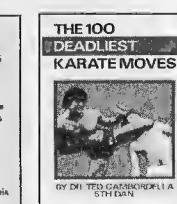
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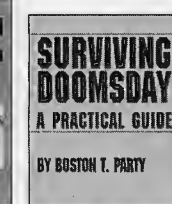
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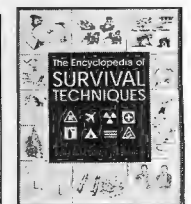
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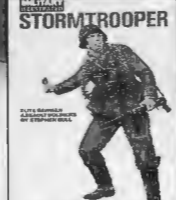

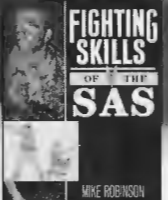
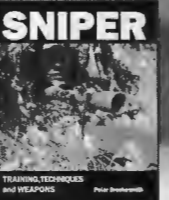
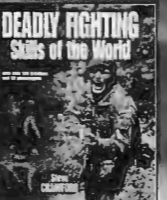




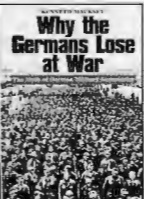
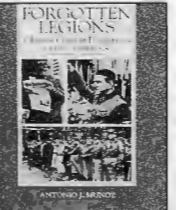


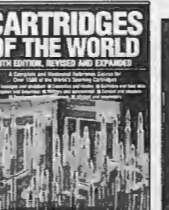



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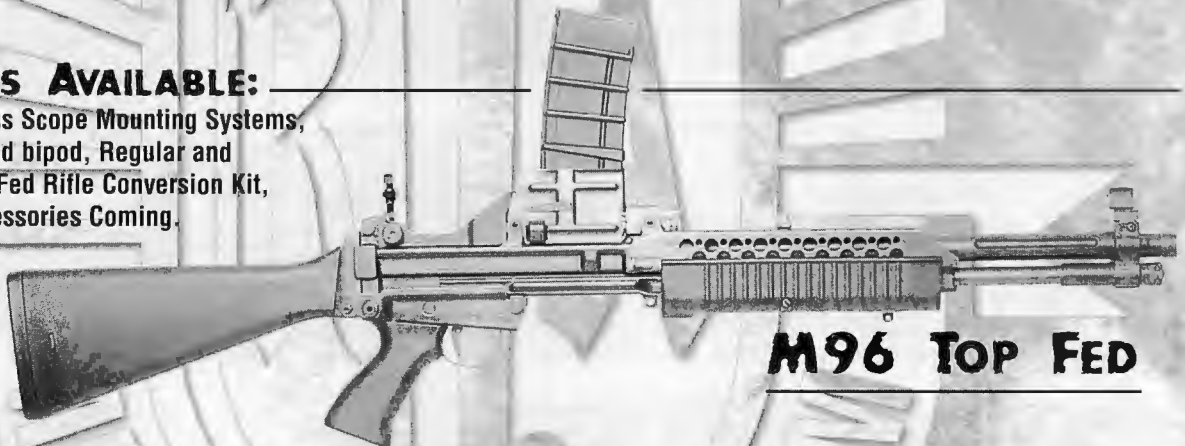
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ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

New Colt® Serrated Blades

The serrated blade, found only on bread knives or powered reciprocating household knives a generation ago, has in the past decade or so come to the fore, especially for tactical knives where some of the commonest materials to be cut are cordage and heavy fabric or belting. Since Spyderco popularized the genre, there have been myriad patterns and styles, some amazingly good and some less so, but one thing they all had in common was that they required a different technique (and tools) for sharpening. Some users never get the hang of sharpening a serrated blade, and for this reason

most purveyors of same offer a factory sharpening service.

Although not a first choice for carving wood, a serrated blade can be a fast cutter in other materials, and there are two mechanisms at work: First, the points tend to concentrate the force against the workpiece, just like even a skinny girl in spike heels can hole a canoe, and the concave radii between the points provide a longer cutting surface per stroke. The esthetic of a serrated blade probably has sold some, as well.

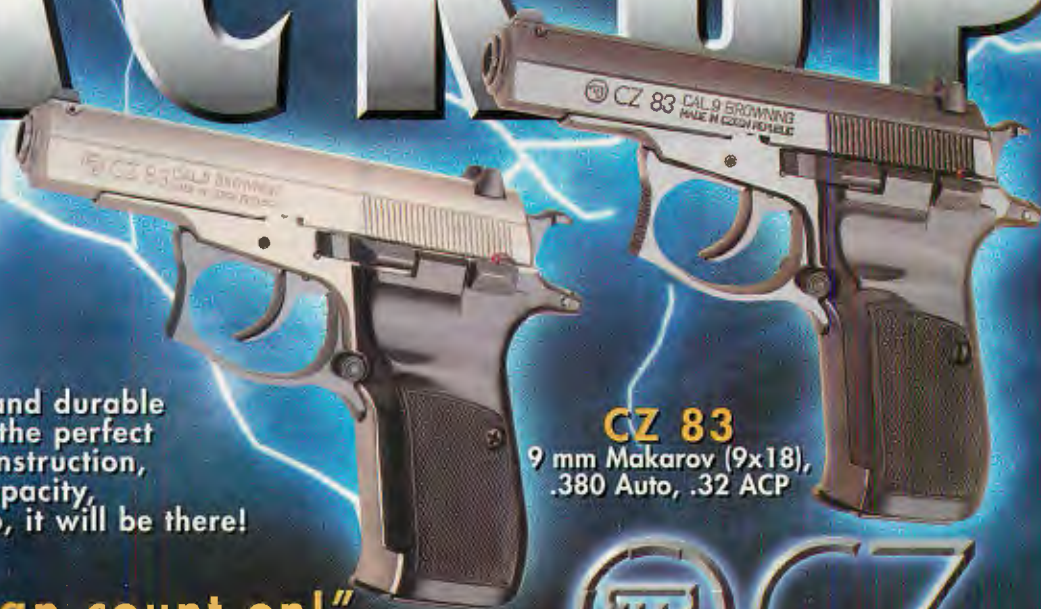
But, to some, especially older coots, such as this writer, who spent the first half of their life learning how to put a decent edge on a regular blade, getting around to resharpen a serrated blade is an easy chore to put-off.



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Once again, the continual flow of bright ideas has met the tide of new technology and in this case riding the crest of the wave is United Cutlery, who under their Colt® logo has introduced a line of laser-cut serrated-blade knives, which offer advantages of serrations, but may be sharpened by any good hand with an Arkansas stone. Unlike scalloped serrations, they are laser-cut at a true right angle to the central axis of the blade, thus the cutting edge is the same as if there were no serrations, and they may be addressed as a single plane for sharpening purposes.

On initial inspection, we wondered if this new patent-pending serration pattern might not trap strong fibers in the notches, but it did not. It cut through Kevlar strap and fabric cleanly and about as fast as the scalloped blade we tested it against — and it cut and shaved wood much better than any scalloped blade we've tested. We'll have to study on it a while to figure out the mechanisms at work which make this new pattern of serrated blade cut so well, but cut it does. And it came back to factory-sharp on a waterstone in a flash.

The Colt® Police Positive® folder we tested features a 3-3/16 in. drop point blade with handles of 6061-T6 aircraft aluminum, attractive and functional impregnated carbon-fiber grip-panel inserts, and a positive liner lock. The blade is bead-blasted, 440 stainless. The laser-cut, CNC milled parts on this line of Colt® knives give the impression they were built by a watchmaker and not a cutler, but the pretty is just a bonus. They are hard-working knives that are good to go, well worth your investment.

Look for them at the United Cutlery dealer nearest you (and you can find him on their website at: www.unitedcutlery.com).

Steady Aim Harness

Precision marksmanship — in long-range hunting or in a tactical sense — requires a stable weapons system. When possible, the weapon system is composed of the shooter, the weapon, and whatever is available as a steady rest. The weak link in this triad is the shooter. Assuming a weapon with appropriate accuracy potential, the next weakest link is the steady rest, whether it be crossed sticks, sandbags, shooting bench, bipods or taking advantage of a natural feature such as the fork of a tree or hummock.



Two generations ago, crossed sticks were the aid of choice for muzzle-heavy buffalo rifles or other long-range field guns. A generation ago, the best available aid for a steady shot was either sitting or prone with the proper use of a sling. Just before WWII, heavy but usable bipods appeared that helped stabilize rifle-caliber automatic

Continued on page 90

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Tactics: New Or Old?

In the firearms community there is an intense interest in tactics and their application to conflicts. As a student of tactics I am constantly reviewing, reading and contemplating the application of firearms and tactics as well as teaching them to students new and old here at Thunder Ranch. There is always the pursuit of or the interest in the “new” technique or the new technology of tactics and firearms. As new people, new gun owners, new tacticians and students come into the fray the pursuit of knowledge continues.

In all the pursuit, which is, of course, for the good of the order, it is in my opinion not always bad to cast a glance over our shoulder into the past. What principles, concepts and guidelines did the tacticians of the past apply to their time and their conflict? Since most of you reading this have at least a moderate interest in firearms and tactics, I thought you might enjoy glancing back with me to a time gone by and see how current principles and doctrine compare to some of the concepts of the past. Could the current concepts have roots in the past? Could concepts of, say, 240 years ago apply today? I have listed some 19 standing orders from a tactician of 240 years ago. Let's see how they hold up to today's standard.

Don't forget nothing.

Sounds good to me! Let's see, I have my pistol and spare ammunition. I remembered my flashlight, cell phone, folding knife and common sense. If I were in the military I would have with me my helmet, body armor, rifle, spare ammunition, radio and a spare and extra spare battery.

Have your musket clean as a whistle, hatchet scoured, 60 rounds powder and ball and be ready to march at a minute's warning.

I think the concept was to have a clean, functional and reliable firearm to fight with — couldn't fault that. Since we don't always know what the fight will be or where, and since most fights aren't what we think they are going to be (e.g., Waco, FBI Miami, North Hollywood). I guess we should have as much ammunition as is possible to carry. Conflicts apparently past and present don't happen when, where or how we thought they would. What was that military axiom? “All plans go to crap when they make contact.”

When you're on the march, act the way you would if you was sneaking up on a deer. See the enemy first.

Ever sneak up on a deer? Or better yet, how many deer did you see on your last stroll through the woods compared to how many deer saw you? I don't know a SWAT officer alive who wouldn't like to find the bad guy first before he finds/sees the SWAT officer in a building search. This could



Could current concepts have roots in the past? Could concepts of, say, 240 years ago apply today? I have listed some 19 standing orders from a tactician of 240 years ago. Let's see how they hold up to today's standard.

also address an area currently called “mental and physical awareness.” Most are familiar with John D. “Jeff” Cooper's Marine Corps modified Color Code of Mental Awareness.

Tell the truth about what you see and what you do. There is an army depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the rangers, but don't never lie to a Ranger or Officer.

There are a couple of real subtle things here. I have a friend who was a senior NCO in Marine Reconnaissance for three tours in Vietnam. When I asked him what he thought his people were least effective in doing, he said, “providing correct information about what they saw.” Let's see, a recon unit that can't articulate what they saw? “Don't lie” is one of my standard-issue statements given to new students or any student who is involved in a confrontation. You know it won't come to any good in the end. It will be especially bad when it comes to the Grand Jury.

Don't never take a chance you don't have to.

Why stop a car at a traffic stop without a backup if you “don't like it?” Why leave the security of your home safe room to clear your house? Why cross the open ground when an extra few minutes allow us to move in the concealment of the treeline? Are there exceptions to the above? You bet. Are they dangerous to your personal safety? Probably.

When we're on the march, we march single file, far enough apart so one shot can't go through two men.

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Let's see the old "one grenade will get you all" concept. With the advent of "flooding" techniques when we fill the room we also provide lots of targets in depth for our opponents. So no SWAT troops get uptight we also provide a strong base of potential return fire by "flooding." It could work in two directions. In a street fight don't step in front of other family members to protect them. I have seen a lot of projectiles go through the initial target; no sense in having two hit when you can limit it to one or even better yet, why don't you use protective cover.

If we strike swamps, or soft ground, we spread out abreast, so it's hard to track us.

The art of tracking is for the most part lost to contemporary society. This has mostly a military application. Tread lightly on the ground and act like someone is following you. Remember your target indicators and don't project them to your opponent.

When we march, we keep moving until dark, so as to give the enemy the least possible chance at us.

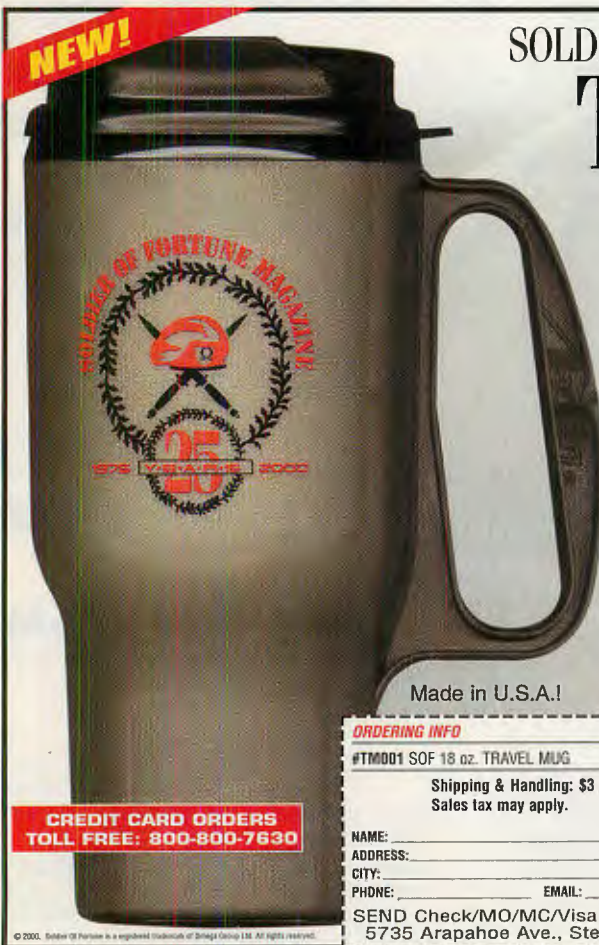
In a contemporary sense this basically addresses reducing exposure time to potential threats. Where did I park my car at the mall? Do I have my keys in my hand as I approach the vehicle? This could be taken so far as to trimming hedges around your home, outdoor lighting and power garage doors to reduce outside exposure upon your arrival home. Our friend of 140 years ago realized that to minimize his exposure to potential threats he needed to keep moving. A moving target (targets) is (are) harder to hit in both the marksmanship category, and in the ambush mode. We all know we "can be had" — let's not make it easy!

When we camp, half the party stays awake while the other half sleeps.

Any prior serviceman, especially any 11 Bravo or 0311, will get the message here right away. Somebody's got to be watching the "pot boil" or looking for bad guys. The middle watches and the dark time before dawn are the hardest, but they can be the busiest too! This whole thing simply promotes the team concept, two to a foxhole, two-man squad cars and a counterpart or spouse who can shoot, fight and contribute to the good of the team.

If we take prisoners, we keep 'em separated till we have had time to examine them, so they can't cook up a story between 'em.

Continued on page 71



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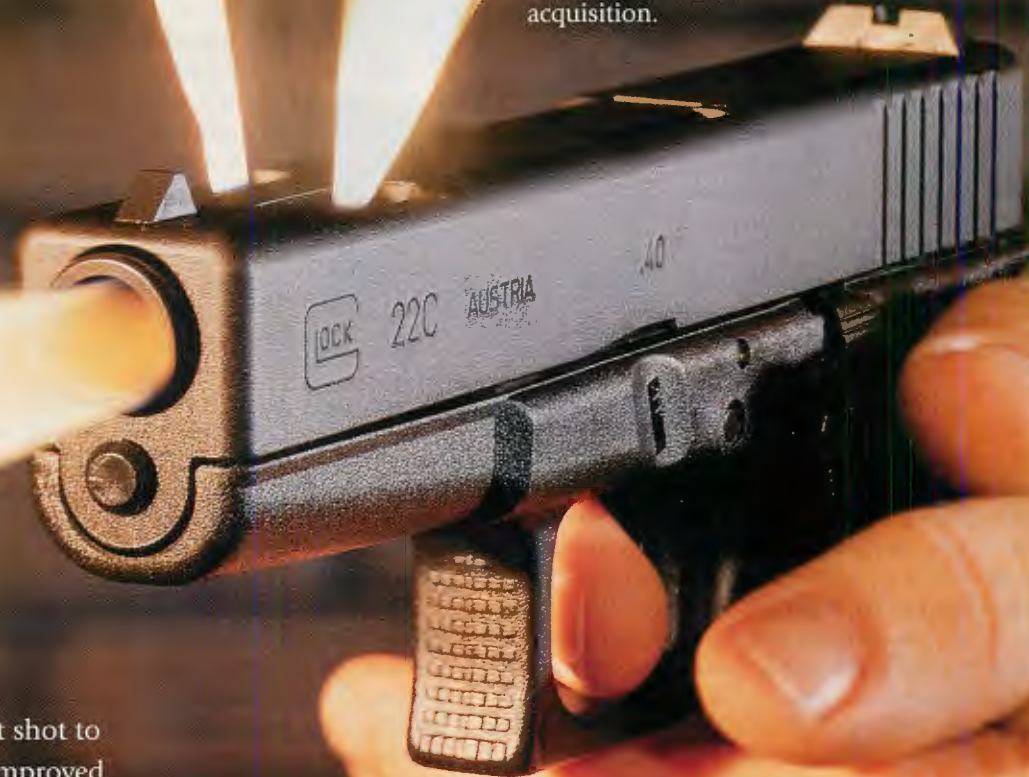
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Battle Blades

by Bill Bagwell

Winning Tactics

The last place on earth that you or I or anyone else wants to find himself is in a real, honest-to-God knife fight. Trust me on this one. But let's just say that things have gotten way out of hand, and you are up against it with no way out and its you or him, blade to blade. Your life or the lives of you and your loved ones are at stake. What are your options? Are there any rules?

You actually have two options, one goal, and one applicable rule. Option one is to fight, but fight stupidly and die. Option two is to fight, but fight intelligently and live to see another day. Assuming that you choose option two and elect to fight intelligently, you must then totally and completely embrace and understand the one and only goal in knifefighting: You must get out of the fight alive. This is the first goal, the only goal, and nothing else matters. At the end of the day, you are still standing and breathing. To accomplish this goal you must follow one simple rule, a rule so simple and obvious that nearly everyone — martial artists included — forgets it, neglects it, or just overlooks it. That rule is simply this: Cut the other guy, but don't get cut yourself!

Think about it. If he can't cut you, he can't hurt you. If, on the other hand, you can reach and cut him without him cutting you, then you have a crucial tactical advantage over your opponent. This advantage is achieved by a twofold approach. The first part of the approach is the mental aspect wherein you have generated the will to get out of the fight alive *without getting cut*. Summoning the will to face a live blade in the hands of an adversary is a difficult but essential component of surviving a knife fight, and is not something to be taken lightly.

The second part of the approach is to have superior equipment and deploy it correctly. As has been stated before, there is a big difference between a fighting knife and a knife you can fight with. If you have a fighting Bowie knife in your hand, you have a lifesaving advantage over an opponent who may be using another style of knife. You will want a knife that has a blade at least 9 1/2 inches in length, and 11 or 11 1/2 inches is even better — if the knife is properly balanced and you can move it properly. The most narrowly focused fighting Bowie that is currently commercially manufactured is the



Author demonstrates proper stance for right-handed person. Blade length on this Bowie is 12 1/2 inches.

Hell's Belle from Ontario Knife company. Cold Steel offers its Trailmaster Bowie with either a stag or Kraton handle, and it has proven itself to be a solid and reliable performer over the years. The Gamblers Bowie from Ontario knife Company also merits serious consideration as a fighting Bowie, and while it is a little smaller and lighter than I personally prefer in a fighting knife, there is no denying its laser quickness. If you are serious about using a knife as a frontline weapon, these are the best commercial options currently available, and you should check them out, select the one that suits you best, and then carry it on a regular basis.

Now that you have equipped yourself with a lifesaving blade, how do you deploy it? What is the secret that lets you cut your opponent without his being able to cut you? To keep from getting cut, you must stay out of range of your opponent. It really is as simple as that. Don't be

dumb enough to get so close to him that he can grab you. If he can touch you with his hand, he can touch you with his blade.

The most effective system ever developed for staying out of harm's way while cutting your opponent at the same time involves the avoidance principles of fencing as practiced in Europe. Duels between gentlemen were affairs of honor, and both lives and reputations lay in the balance at the conclusion of such an engagement. While a large number of these duels were fights to the death, many were simply fought until one of the combatants drew the blood of the other. Thus the principle of first blood gave rise to the very real need for a system of strategies and tactics that let one man cut another with his blade while staying untouched himself.

The European dueling code and methodology actually developed along lines of gentlemanly conduct and behavior, and the best scientific and practical minds of the period were brought to bear on the problem. The culmination of this effort was a superior, highly sophisticated method of stealing reach and distance from your opponent. This quickly resulted in the development of a group of highly skilled blade prac-

Continued on page 85

Shooting? Reloading? Think DILLON

AT 500

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RL 550B

XL 650

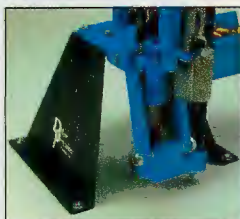
RL 1050

SL 900



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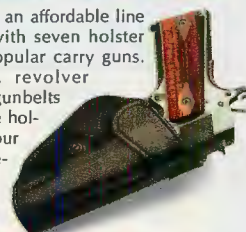
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WORLD SITREP



1

UNITED STATES

Back To Baghdad: U.S. and British aircraft hit five command and control sites, just south of Baghdad. Iraq says two civilians were killed and 20 wounded. There were no friendly shootdowns. • **Hiding But Not Forgotten:** CIA Director Tenet says that Usama bin Laden is most immediate threat to America's overseas interests – and also to U.S. territory. Up to \$5M is being offered for information leading to bin Laden's apprehension. Ex-senators Hart and Rudman say that myth of U.S. invulnerability will be smashed. America is already target of one-third of global terrorist incidents. • **Pardon Us, Please?** Before jetting off to New York, Clinton tossed out 141, or so, pardons, 12% of which relate to cocaine. • **Slow Wheels Of Justice:** DNA samples being tested at U.S. Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in landmark case of Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald, former Special Forces captain. Amplification of DNA material seems to be hold-up since testing began back in December. According to many legal and forensic authorities, case has "botched" written all over it ... and then there's the matter of suppressed evidence not made available to defense during the 1979 trial. • **Chinagate Still A "Go":** FBI Director Freeh has no plans to alter his 1998 recommendation to thoroughly investigate Clinton-Gore money scandal.

4

ISRAEL

Passing The Torch Backward: Ariel Sharon, noted hardline politico and commando, elected prime minister in landslide. Palestinians, hardly joyous of Sharon's victory, along with moderate Israelis, can expect virtually no give-and-take.

5

RUSSIA

Good Credit: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will invest in joint venture (largest in Russian auto history) between AO AvtoVAZ and General Motors. • **Chechnya Quagmire:** Russian troops still face tough opposition in renegade province. No end in sight.

9

AZERBAIJAN/ARMENIA

Joining The Party: Admitted to the Council of Europe on 25 January, despite continuing hostility over predominantly Armenian enclave of Nagorny Karabakh, which is inside Azeri territory. Continued access to Azerbaijan and its capital, Baku, remain near top of Western wish lists as oil boom continues.

7

10

GREAT BRITAIN

Backfire? Anti-Terrorism Act, to become law on 19 Feb., could provoke terrorism in Islamic nations, where Britain's presence is largely resented.

13

AFGHANISTAN

Good Weather — Bad Blood: Mild winter fans flames of combat as Taliban and Northern Alliance again square-off. Early spring offensive is forecast. Pakistan may continue support of Taliban while Russia might cast its lot with the NA.

14

CHILE

Regional Arms Race Catalyst? USG and Lockheed Martin's plan to sell 12 F-16s to Chile faces uphill P.R. battle. Reduction in regional military rivalries, however, might reduce friction and allow sale to proceed.

15

LIBYA

Back To Yesteryear? Eyeing huge quantities of high-grade oil, it seems unlikely that the West will wish to further pursue involvement of Moammar Khadafy in more acts of international terrorism.

2

MEXICO

Bounties, Bounties Everywhere: U.S. Border Patrol officers, DEA agents and other personnel are being targeted by Mexico-based drug cartels with bounties going as high as \$200k. More than 500 violent assaults have occurred so far this year. • **Illegal Aliens:** Thousands still flood across 2,200 mile border with U.S. with drugs an increasing factor. Rumors of Cuban and Chinese operators surface as terrorist strikes into U.S. become burgeoning concern.

3

CANADA

North America's Toughest Gun Law: Despite government claims, it appears that nearly 400,000 — out of 2.2 million gun owners — said "to hell" with applying for licenses.

6

COLOMBIA

Trying To Kick-Start Peace Talks: President Pastrana attempts to restart peace talks by journeying into G-held territory. Since government and guerrillas are fighting to stand-off, Pastrana may dangle land concessions to get talks moving. U.S. officials and many from government are against such enticements.

7

ECUADOR

Still Waiting: Gs still hold six oil company execs but have downsized their ransom demand to \$13M from \$80M. One hostage has thus far been executed. Petrol giants believe paying-off kidnapers invites further extortion.

8

ANGOLA

Making Its Move: Because of internal security concerns, Luanda's political and military alliances makes it definite player in southern Africa.

10

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11

ALBANIA

Wag The Dog For Real? Kosovar Albanian militants seemingly fail to disrupt relations between Belgrade and KFOR. Power struggle inside Albania might find Usama bin Laden in the mix. U.S. forces seem to be stuck for the long haul.

8

12

THAILAND

Down To The Sea In Ships: Thailand and Malaysia to conduct joint naval exercises during 2001. Thailand, however, to cut back on Cobra Gold exercises with U.S. due to financial reasons. Stronger ties between these two might force U.S. to strengthen bonds with the Philippines and Singapore.

16

CHINA

Still The Same: Clinton's overtures to our newest good neighbor notwithstanding, it appears certain that ample animosity against U.S. still makes China's heart go aflutter. Threats to bomb United States, if we should intervene on side of Taiwan, points to consistent lingering saber-rattling of many Sino hardliners.

World Sitrep is compiled by the SOF staff with information from various media and correspondents.

BULLETIN BOARD

Zambia Anti-Poaching Patrols

Although poaching is a continuing problem in Zambia, it is exacerbated during the off season with most bush camps being closed and with no tourism or camp management in the various areas. Couple this with the fact that no National Parks Officers are doing anti-poaching, the camps/lodges in the Mfuwe area have decided to initiate a self-help project to help stem the poaching tide. The project receives voluntary financial support through monthly contributions from the lodges/camps in and around South Luangwa National Park. The funds support the Honorary Rangers R.A.T.S. (Rapid Action Team).



According to the Zambian Wildlife Act, an Honorary Ranger is "A volunteer law enforcement officer of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. He is empowered under the act to enforce the law with the same powers as any full-time Wildlife Police Officer." As of late November 2000, the RATS number 22 men, made up of ex-Wildlife Police Officers and ex-Escort Scouts. The RATS area of operation includes South Luangwa National Park and the surrounding GMA's (Game Management Area). The anti-poaching activities include: a series of seven- to 15-day patrols in the National Park and GMA's, daily anti-snare patrols, checks and control of all fishing camps and fishermen, snap roadblocks, 24-hour guard duty of captured suspects and a network of informers.

In addition to the anti-poaching effort, an educational program within area schools, using local guides, is structured to create awareness with the students for the wildlife. Results and recoveries so far include: 116 arrests, three rifles, two automatic assault weapons, 72 muzzle-loading rifles, 15 shotguns, 52 pieces of ivory, 23 animal carcasses, 500 kilograms of dried meat (various animals), 470 wire snares, 38 fishing nets and four vehicles (one Land Rover, one Toyota Hilux, one Isuzu and one Toyota Land Cruiser).

In addition to the funds contributed by the camps/lodges, the RATS are in need of various pieces of equipment. Right

now I am the point of contact for collecting equipment and shipping it to the RATS. Needed items include: uniforms/overalls, rain gear/ponchos, backpacks, hats, canteens/water bottles, two/three-man tents and flashlights. Clothing and equipment needs to be khaki, green, brown or black — no camouflage.

Donations may be coordinated at the following points of contact: Mike McPike/Global Adventures, 8762 S. Mourning Dove Lane, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126; phone: 303-791-9959; <http://www.globaladventures.com>.

Cross-Border Run VI

If you ride, you don't want to miss this year's cross-border run in honor of the many thousands of our Canadian brothers who served, died and never returned from Vietnam. The venues are Kahnawake and Melocheville, Quebec, the dates 13-14 July. Contact person is Dominic: phone/fax: 514-739-6237; e-mail rovend@attcanada.ca. Further details on their web site: www.attcanada.ca/~rovend/Vietnam.html.

Japanese Junior Airgun Team Busted

Japan has long been the case study in draconian firearms laws — but Canadian Customs has done them one better: Canada Customs officials at Lester B. Pearson International Airport detained the Japanese Junior Airgun Team and seized their airguns on 30 January, saying they were trying to determine if the airguns should be considered "firearms" under C-68, the recently enacted Canadian Firearms Act, and if so, whether or not Temporary Firearms [sic] Licenses can be issued to the junior competitors — since they are all minors.

The team was traveling to compete at the annual Crossman International Airgun Grand Prix, hosted in Toronto this year by the Canadian Shooting Sports Association. CILA Executive Director Tony Bernardo, commenting on the controversial new gun law, said, "This is exactly the kind of nonsense we have repeatedly warned about. These kids are not a threat to Canadian society. These future Olympic competitors will hardly be doing drive-bys in Toronto with their \$3,000 competition pellet guns, but they'll sure remember this if Toronto succeeds in getting its Olympic bid."

Combat Veterans Get-Together

The Combat Veterans Association (Box 185, Satsuma, AL 36572-0185; phone: 334-675-0488) is sponsoring an open rendezvous ("open" means everyone: campers, RVers, Bikers, etc.) near Mobile, Ala., from Thursday 26 July 2001, through Sunday 29 July. Planned events include tours to Battleship Park (site of 'Bama VN Vets Memorial, berth of Battleship *Alabama*, home of Calamity Jane — B52 that flew many mis-

BACK ISSUES



#231 JANUARY 97

WEAPONS: return of the BAR; **AIRCRAFT:** T&E of Longbow Apache; **BATF:** rogues' gallery of lying supervisors and agents; **VIETNAM WAR:** declassified secrets of SOG's legendary Mad Dog; **IRAQ:** Saddam's war against Kurds; **BURMA:** training Karen snipers.

#232 FEBRUARY 97

ELITE UNITS: SOF spies on Delta Force training in Houston; **NORTHERN IRELAND:** does peace have a future? **BOSNIA:** NATO air power; **AFGHANISTAN:** alliance against Taliban faction; **SOUTHEAST ASIA:** SOF on the ground with Bo Mya in Burma.



#233 MARCH 97

ANALYSIS: hostage rescue disaster in Iran; **DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:** exclusive report on Gulf War Syndrome; how firearms dealers can survive Gun Gestapo bullying; **SOUTHEAST ASIA:** H'mong fight genocide in Laos; **TRAINING:** Thunder Ranch — boot camp for precision shooters.

#234 APRIL 97

BATF: double standard for race relations; **WEAPONS:** South Africa's new 20mm sniper rifle; **TRAINING:** gunfighter school run by former SEALs; **SOUTHEAST ASIA:** Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia; **MIDDLE EAST:** most hazardous AO in Israeli military.



SOLO OUT! #235 MAY 97

#236 JUNE 97 **SOLO OUT!**

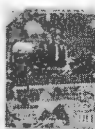


#237 JULY 97

AFRICA: mayhem, mysticism and misery in Uganda; **MIDDLE EAST:** terrorism in Damascus; **PHILIPPINES:** government and Moro rebels unite to defeat Muslim faction; **BATF:** Congress grounds ATF air force; **MEDIA:** former SEAL Harry Humphries helps Hollywood get it right.

#238 AUGUST 97

EL SALVADOR: Zona Rosa massacre update; police and military battle drug thugs; **MIDDLE EAST:** anatomy of a Mossad assassination; **WEAPONS:** Russia's secret battle rifle; Kah's semiauto pistols; **RUSSIA:** downsizing military hits hard.



#239 SEPTEMBER 97

KOREA: SOF on DMZ; **WEAPONS:** RPG-7; new South African Vektor 40mm AGI; **VICARIOUS THRILLS:** flying with USAF Thunderbirds; **MERCYS:** European "advisers" in Zaire; **INDONESIA:** civic action or occupation in East Timor?

#240 OCTOBER 97

EXPANDED ANNIVERSARY ISSUE! MEDIA: behind the scenes at Soldier of Fortune, Inc. TV series; **KNIVES:** training with Bowies; **VIETNAM:** did Soviets grab U.S. pilots? **PERU:** dramatic rescue at Japanese Ambassador's Residence; **RUSSIA:** SOF inside military training base; **WEAPONS:** Walther's into the 21st century.



SOLO OUT! #241 NOVEMBER 97



#242 DECEMBER 97

ELITE UNITS: interview with SEAL founder Roy Boehm; SEAL Team 2 in Tet Offensive; **GERMANY:** elite operators of GSG-9; **WEAPONS:** H&K modifies USSOCOM .45 ACP handgun; **DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:** scientists at Aberdeen use supercomputer to calculate data for Iraq's missiles.

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#243 JANUARY 98

TERRORISM: Mossad plays deadly phone tag with Hamas; Colombian army battles narco-terrorists; **TRAINING:** shooting in the shadows at Thunder Ranch; **RUSSIA:** on the street with Moscow's OMON troops; **VIETNAM:** Seal Team Two vs. Viet Cong; **ATF:** goes to Africa



#244 FEBRUARY 98

ELITE UNITS: French Army's 2nd REP parachute regiment; **WEAPONS:** Steyr Scout Rifle; **DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:** FBI searches for Chinese spies at Aberdeen Proving Ground; **AFRICA:** clearing land mines in South Africa; tribal warriors fight for democracy in Sierra Leone

#245 MARCH 98

CHINA: new rebellion against communists; **EASTERN EUROPE:** CIA vs. FBI turf wars; **WEAPONS:** Vektor's CR21 bullpup; merc's multi-tools; **AFRICA:** separatist Gs in Angola; **TERRORISM:** how Iraq almost — and may yet — build the bomb



#246 APRIL 98

AFRICA: American black ops; **WEAPONS:** happy 50th birthday to the AK; Kimber's neoclassic .45; **MIDDLE EAST:** Hebron's Apache platoon; "Balkanization" of Lebanon; **TACTICS:** sniping in the year 2000



BACK ISSUES

#247 MAY 98

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS: discrimination in BATF; **IRAQ:** Saddam's chem/bio threat; **TRAINING:** grad school for snipers; **BOSNIA:** U.S. vets whip Croats into shape; **WEAPONS:** Chandler Sniper Rifle; SpecOps "Doom" Buggy



#248 JUNE 98

MIDDLE EAST: U.S. troops on Kuwait-Iraq border; **DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:** ATF and IRS bust another law-abiding gun dealer; **SOF** at U.S. Army's premier heavy-force training site; **INVASION?:** German air force in New Mexico; **ENDLESS WARS:** Taliban vs. muj in Afghanistan

#249 JULY 98

ELITE UNITS: Royal Jordanian Special Forces; **DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:** Clinton's end-run gun ban; **WEAPONS:** Mossberg M920A1 shotgun; Russia's Saiga-12 semiauto 12-gauge shotgun; **COLOMBIA:** coke-bustlin' Broncos; **KOSOVO:** Albania's Ruby Ridge;



#250 AUGUST 98

WEAPONS: pistol whipping for the 21st century; H&K's new G36 combat rifle; **MERCENARIES:** where today's action is for hired guns; **SRI LANKA:** Tamil Tigers' heist of the century; **VIETNAM:** siege of An Loc, part II

#251 SEPTEMBER 98

RUSSIA: inside renaissance militias; **PHILIPPINES:** Mindanao meltdown; **TERRORISM:** weapons of mass destruction for tiny tyrants; **DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:** USG eco-terrs vs. conservationist in Hawaii; **MEDIA:** blasting CNN/Time's Tailwind story



#252 OCTOBER 98

TERRORISM: Iran's terror exports; **KNIVES:** Gurkha kukri; **AFRICA:** guerrillas in the night-vision; **DEFENDER:** debut of expanded product review section; **CHINA:** has next Cold War started?

#253 NOVEMBER 98

VIETNAM: true story of Operation Tailwind; **RUSSIA:** SOF goes on bust with tax cops; **ALBANIA:** smuggling small arms into Kosovo — SOF's eye-witness report; **VETERANS AFFAIRS:** one man exposes more than 1,000 phony vets



#254 DECEMBER 98

COLOMBIA: profile of director general of Colombian National Police; **TERRORISM:** targeting Sudan and bin Laden; **MERCENARIES:** freelancers in Angola and the Congo; **MEDIA:** technical blunders in Saving Private Ryan

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sions over North Vietnam), flyover by Blue Angels, skydiving demo, excursions to "The Boats" at Biloxi plus attendance of notables and war heroes. Evenings are left mostly open for campfires and camaraderie, good food and drink and renewing or making friendships. Additional details at their website: www.Vietnamvets.Homestead.Com/> Vietnam Veterans Rendezvous 2001 .

AG: "Citizens Have a Right ..."

In a breath of political fresh air and Constitutional revival, newly confirmed U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft noted on CNN's "Larry King Live" that "law-abiding citizens have a right, under our Constitution, to have firearms." The stated official position of the last regime's Justice Department was that "the Second Amendment does not extend an individual right to keep and bear arms."

To Russia With No Love Whatsoever

Interfax News Agency reports that former Klan leader and founder of the National Organization for European American Rights, David Duke, has announced plans to move to Russia "to struggle against people of other colors and with Jews." Duke was originally in Russia to launch his new book *Ultimate Supremacism: An Examination of the Jewish Question*, where he met with native Russian bent-heads Albert Makashov (a wildly nationalistic politician), and Aleksandr Parakhanov, publisher of the anti-semitic *Zavtra* daily paper. On his web site, Duke has lauded Russia as the current bulwark of the white race.

Barr's Bill a Hit?

Representative Bob Barr (R.-Ga.) has introduced legislation designed at giving governmental agencies more latitude in their dealings with the Saddams, bin Ladens and Fidels of the world.

Although most observers feel that Barr's "Terrorist Elimination Act of 2001" is too controversial — and too overt — to receive enough support in Congress, Barr noted that "the United States already takes actions clearly designed to remove foreign leaders. In the 1980s, we took actions clearly designed to remove Moammar Gadhafi ... I've introduced it this year ... Because these executive orders arbitrarily limit the options available to the president when dealing with terrorists."

According to the "Prohibition of Assassination" section of Executive Order 11905 penned by President Gerald Ford, "no employee of the United States government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in political assassination."

A sitting president has authority to rescind previous executive orders, and Rep. Barr has written President Bush urging hi to do so in this case. In a letter to Bush, Barr noted that specific sections of Ford's executive order, and subsequent modifications by President Reagan, "limit the United States from dealing with international terrorist threats."

AR-Palooza

AR buffs, take note: The Grand Casino and resort at Tunica, Miss., Will be the scene next 28-30 September of a

great AR festival covering every facet of this weapons family. Featured will be an expo for manufacturers, parts and accessory suppliers and gunsmiths, who will display merchandise relating to the AR15 or related designs such as the AR10, M4, etc. There will be a symposium on the history and development of the rifle, competitive shooting events, and a test range open. A "dealer day" before the public is invited will allow manufacturers to demonstrate their wares to FFL dealers.

Exhibit space starts at \$550 for a 10x10 booth; exhibitor rooms at the Grand Casino are \$59 a night, plus tax. Sponsored by *The Shotgun News*, more information on this great AR-enthusiasts' event can be found on the web at www.shotgunnews.com .

Chinese Probe Canadian North

A Canadian Department of National Defence study has concluded that the Canadian military should use unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and space-based sensors to keep an eye on its vast, resource-rich Arctic territories. Officials at the Northern Region HQ, in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, have raised concerns over the decrease in Canadian military presence in the far north, and the apparent increase in interest in the area shown by China and perhaps other powers. The military wants to install ground-moving target indicator technology on Radarsat 2, schedule for launch in the next few years, which would be able to detect moving objects such as armored personnel carriers and mobile missile launchers.

Concerns over the northern territories were heightened in August 1999 when a Chinese government research vessel arrived unannounced and undetected at Tuktoyaktuk, NWT. Military officials also believe that a month later a submarine of unknown origin may have been operating in Cumberland Sound off Baffin Island. A September letter from the commander of the Canadian Forces Northern Area to the Chief of Defence Staff noted that, "the vast mineral, marine and freshwater resources located in the Canadian Arctic virtually ensure the existence of future challenges to Canadian claims to sovereignty over the Arctic waters and archipelago." Such incursions as occurred "may indicate that other nations are becoming more interested in the Canadian Arctic and the Canadian Forces' ability to respond to probes."

Army To Select New Chute

With an eye toward making combat jumps safer — thus the number of combat-effective troops who land greater — the Army is closing in on the selection of a new design to replace the venerable T-10. Within five years, airborne troops will be jumping the Advanced Tactical Parachute System, a main and reserve chute designed to reduce the rate of descent by 25%, with the reserve deployable even on very low-altitude jumps, if necessary. The ATPS is also designed to support a considerably greater load, as today's paratroops are bigger, and the loads they jump heavier. The reserve on the new chutes being tested is also located more near the shoulders, decreasing strain on the body from the opening shock.

The slower descent rate is to reduce the jumper's impact energy by 40%, thus slashing landing injuries. "The reduction of injuries is a combat multiplier," noted Major Joel Rieman of the Army's Soldier Systems Center. ✕



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AMERICA'S HO CHI MINH TRAIL

SOF Cuts Sign With U.S. Border Patrol



Cursory weapons search of detained alien. Most pose no danger, they just want work.

Douglas Station, AZ — Stumbling into a wadi and through one thorny bush after another, we tried to sneak up on a group of six illegal aliens hiding somewhere in the scrub. Monty Garland, senior operations officer from the U.S. Border Patrol's Douglas Station, peered into the darkness. "The way they keep moving, they're guys, and they're young. If it was a mixed group they wouldn't be ducking around like this." It was the middle of the night, cold and dusty. SOF was beating the bushes on America's own Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Arizona border with Mexico, and one of the hottest infiltration routes into the U.S. Foot trails worn by hundreds of thousands of crossers scarred the desert floor, and tons of discarded detritus piled up at every lay-in point. Through this tiny slice of Arizona, an army was on the move.

It hadn't been dark three hours and we had already apprehended or turned back over 100 people, and this was the holiday slowdown. The group we were tracking now had been giving us the runaround from the start. Another contact came in from the Sky Towers, so we set off to pursue them. "We'll come back for these guys in awhile. They'll try to come up to the highway again and that's when we'll get them," Garland told us as we barreled

down yet another dirt track and into a cow field, picking up fresh sign in the spotlight as we drove along. The drill is the same every night: illegal entrants and smugglers of every ilk try to infiltrate the United States, and the Border Patrol tries to interdict them. With the Douglas Sector alone being bigger than Rhode Island, it's a daunting task. Rough, desert-mountain terrain makes the job even tougher.

Text & Photos by
Jim Bartlett & Angelica Allini



Bird in hand. U.S. Border Patrol Agents process group of highly mobile aliens. For three hours they eluded ground units.



USBP Quad Runners play cat and mouse in the desert scrub outside Douglas, AZ. Low profiles and high speed make the ATVs an excellent ambush platform. Quad Runners give USBP unprecedented mobility. (right) Agents keep sharp eye out for potential fence jumpers.



NAFTA Goes Human

In addition to the usual contraband trade, immigrant smuggling has developed into a highly organized, multi-million-dollar marketplace and remains the U.S. Border Patrol's primary mission. Senior agents shed light on the scope of the problem. "When I worked on the Canadian border we saw some weird alliances," Assistant Chief Ron Colburn, a 25-year veteran of the force, told us. "Biker gangs working with Chinese triads, Israeli criminal groups working with Jamaicans, alliances you just wouldn't imagine. Here on the Mexican border we don't see so much of that, but what does stand out is many more groups moving much greater numbers. It's not uncommon for individual gangs to run 1,000 people a month. When they're charging anywhere from \$500 to \$40,000 a head, it adds up pretty quick."

Border Patrol figures for Cochise County alone showed over 289,000 detentions for FY 2000. At an average of \$5,000 a head, smugglers and middle men saw a potential gross of over \$14,450,000 through one small slice of Arizona. This doesn't count those who were deterred or never caught. Most of those detained will keep trying. Many will eventually make it.



As frustration with increased Border Patrol interdiction rises, so do rockings. Over half the USBP fleet in Douglas now has anti-projectile screening.

It's become more profitable than narcotics smuggling, with lower overhead and less risk. As profits skyrocket, an extensive network from recruitment point to final destination has developed, including an infrastructure of arrangers and employers right here in the U.S.

In Mexico and Latin America, the first point of contact for a potential entrant is a *bodegero* (or warehouseman). This person, usually networking with an arranger in the U.S., recruits workers and makes arrangements for

their transit to the border. "They're kind of like a customs brokerage, and these people are their commodity," we were told. "They gather in the goods and warehouse them until it's time to go north, just like a shipment of tomatoes." Payment is, of course, up front.

From there, the "goods" are turned over to a *pollero*, Spanish for chicken hauler. The *pollero* will then guide his shipment to and across the border to rendezvous points on the U.S. side with the infamous *coyotes*

(or pick-up men). This is the stage where things can start to get ugly. Banditry on the south side is rampant and outright murder is not uncommon, as potential entrants are rolled for their savings, watches, boots or whatever the thieves fancy. Just north of the border, the elements take over.

It has become common for smugglers to pocket payment and at the first sign of the Border Patrol, leave the group to their own devices. Sometimes they simply take the money and leave them in the middle of nowhere. In the unforgiving Southwest desert, this can mean a death sentence for the unprepared.

"Because of the hardening of the urban sectors, they're having to go farther and farther out. The smugglers will



Controllers in Douglas monitoring room keep an eye out for any incursions. High-tech sensor and surveillance units help steny cover to would-be intruders.



Porous borders. Out beyond the "Wall," the border is marked by little more than the cow fence on the left. Both mobile and stationary units try to plug the holes.



Mobile "Sky Lift" keeps tabs on cross-border traffic with milspec Thermal Imaging Scope.

paint the picture that it's only another 2-3 miles, when really it's 15-30," long-time BP Agent Rene Noriega explained. "We've encountered groups of aliens just sitting out there in the desert, sometimes for days, waiting for a smuggler who told them he's going to get the car but never returns. Their greed and total disregard for human life is something we're very concerned about."

So far this year the Tucson sector agents have had to perform 1,349 rescues of aliens in the desert. In addition to that, 139 deaths have been officially recorded but local media sources put that figure much higher. Many times the desert simply swallows people up. No one knows for sure how many don't make it.

"If you're coming into this area and you're not prepared to deal with the elements, you're putting yourself in jeopardy. We're here to enforce the

laws, but we don't want to see people die just because they tried to come to this country."

We deployed with thermals, coats, hats and canvas gaiters. At 4,000 feet, the Douglas Sector gets pretty chilly and we were feeling the cold. Illegal crossers we encountered were pathetically equipped with a sweater or tattered coat or sometimes a moth-eaten blanket. "We find bones all the time in the more remote areas," a young agent related. "The smugglers get them out here, abandon them and they can die. Pretty ruthless game they're playing, but what really gets me is when they bring little kids over, and I see it all the time."

Cheap Labor, Anyone?

For the entrant who is fortunate enough to emerge alive and undetained north of the border areas, further facili-

ties and danger awaits them. Networks of sweatshop slave pens, false documents and the crossfire of rival smuggling gangs all line the yellow brick road of illegal immigration. For most, the final destination is a corporate farm field, construction site or a sweatshop for sub-minimum wage. As handlers nickel-and-dime the workers for everything from room and board to transportation, many are lucky to make anything at all. For the employers it means a lower bottom line. It's similar to what the U.S. witnessed in the Appalachian coal fields of the 1920s with the infamous company store.

"It's an underground culture of indenturedship," Colburn explained. "Many times the destination is pre-arranged and they're caught for years trying to work off the cost of their own importation. We're also seeing a whole new sub-culture of fraudulent docu-



(below) Aliens will use every nook and cranny to evade USBP Agents, including these drain culverts near Douglas water treatment plant. (left) Inventive smugglers torched and ripped out this section of the new border fence in Douglas. Three carloads of pot and a mob of aliens made for a merry chase into downtown.



ments being created. Social Security cards, driver's licenses, work permits, everything. Sometimes they're counterfeit, sometimes real but matched with a lookalike customer. It's allowing some of them access to the social welfare programs here."

Once they're successfully infiltrated, detection of an illegal entrant is almost impossible on the local level, as they blend into the population, just as the Viet Cong did. In addition to simple workers, the potential for subversive or terrorist infiltration is also high. As such, border detection and interdiction have assumed a greater urgency. Long a cash-strapped, forgotten agency, the Border Patrol is finally getting the manpower and high-tech goodies other forces have enjoyed for years.

Gate Crashers On Candid Camera

In a darkened room looking more like an NSA base than some dusty outpost in Arizona, a feminine computer voice chimed out, "Alert at number two." Somewhere along the line a seismic detection unit had registered a "hit." Immediately, one of the several operators sitting in front of a bank of monitors pushed a couple of buttons and moved a small joystick on his console. Two miles away, atop an 80-foot-tall camera tower, an infrared imaging scope came to bear on the area in question. Just north of the line a group of seven or eight people showed up in varying shades of thermal green.

"Yup, that's the same group. They've moved down from 12," he remarked, sending out the coordinates to a nearby ground unit. As we watched, a patrol vehicle came down the border access road and gave the crossers a flash from his spotlight. They waved and hopped back into Mexico over the rusting cow fence that marks the boundary. It would all

be entered in the log as a "Deter."

"The Thermal scopes on the Sky Towers really give us an edge down here. Very little gets past them," Agent Garland pointed out. "We've had regular night-vision for some time, but it's limited in its range and resolution. With this, we can actually tell the makeup of a group or if they're carrying loads or weapons." In addition to the fixed towers, the USBP also deploys several mobile units that can be set up anywhere they are needed to provide thermal coverage of more remote areas. Problem is, though, there is never enough to cover everything.

While the Sky Towers are the newest and best of the detection and deterrence equipment fielded by the BP, many layers of defense go into policing the border.

Starting at the very bottom of the technology ladder is a new element of border security that drew lots of flak from the left: a big, giant wall backed by a line of floodlights. Illegal entrants and smugglers favor urban crossing points where they can immediately blend in. As a result, towns like Douglas and Nogales, whose streets and houses run right up to the old wire fence, were literally stamped with crossers every night. "When I came down here three years ago, people were just hopping the wire or driving through it every night," Agent Garland recalled. "We were having foot pursuits through back yards right into downtown."

Stretching 4.5 miles through town, the new wall is about 15-ft. tall and built out of steel pickets and landing

mat. Work is ongoing to extend it out to 12 miles or farther. "It's really cramped their style. They have to go farther and farther out. People here are finally getting some sleep."

Despite the inconvenience, however, determined smugglers are not above having a go at the imposing structure. We were shown one spot where they had actually cut through it, one little piece at a time. When the day came to launch their foray, they hooked on with chains and pulled down the whole section, dragging it several blocks into Mexico. Meanwhile, three cars full of pot and a mob of aliens rushed into Douglas. "It was pretty exciting there for awhile, but we got everyone rounded up and called the Mexican authorities to get our fence back."

A short way back from the line, the array gets a little more high-tech with seismic, magnetic and light beam sensors. These are especially useful out into the desert past the wall and lighted area. Completely automated, they give operators in the control center a heads up when anything approaches or crosses by them, be it people or vehicles.

Despite being Vietnam vintage, the seismic detectors note any vibration in the ground and set off an alert in the center, just as they did along the Ho Chi Minh Trail years ago. The magnetic sensors are a little more subjective and can be rotated to get a fix on the direction of a contact. Besides vehicles, they can also be pointed at suspicious human contacts to determine if they are carrying any firepower. The

light beams are a high-tech version of a tripwire and can cover sizable distances but are prone to registering hits by cows and coyotes. As with everything else, the border is long and resources limited, so not every area gets complete coverage.

Dh, Won't You Stay, Just A Little Bit Longer?

Once apprehended, the detention facility awaits illegal entrants with an impressive array of IDENT technology. It houses a state of the art combination of laser scan fingerprint readers, digital photo databases and is networked across the spectrum of federal and state computer records. Today, the system can sort out who is who almost instantly. Those not wanted on criminal charges or repeated apprehensions are quickly sent back to Mexico.

Those whose file sends up a flag may have to stay a little longer. "Only 10 to 20 percent will be charged crim-

inally," Asst. Chief Colburn had told us. "The first few offenses we'll charge administratively, but at some point you've got to draw the line, especially if there are aggressive circumstances surrounding the arrest or the person is a known smuggler." Repeat offenders could receive up to five years under Title 18 immigration laws.

In addition to making it harder for repeat offenders to keep up the game for too long, the IDENT system has made it possible to snap up bigger fish that may have gone undetected only a few years ago. "We get the occasional terrorist-profile, murderers, you name it. Whereas they might have blended in with the rest of the people before, now the system flags them and they get sent on to higher proceedings. About once a year, just in Arizona, we manage to flag at least one off the most wanted list." For those crossing through the hands of federal enforcement, Big Brother is getting harder and harder to duck.

"It's one of the best tools we have, but we need them in every Station," we were told.

Down And Dusty

Mingling in with all of the detection technology are the agents on ground patrols. While all the gizmos make it easier to "find and fix" crossers, it is still the individual Border Patrol Agent who must get down in the dust and make the physical apprehensions. Agents are usually outnumbered. "It requires a great deal of 'Officer Presence' to corral a group of entrants," Agent Garland pointed out. While patrols are being doubled up for safety in the more remote areas, we were told it's not uncommon to have a single agent run down as many as 100 illegals in one swoop. Armed with only a Beretta 92d in .40 S&W, it also takes a fair amount of nerve.

If surveillance or intelligence war-

Continued on page 82

A Long And Colorful History

When most of us think about the Border Patrol, we usually register immigration from Mexico and Latin America. That wasn't always the case. During the early 1920s the main problem on the border was hordes of Chinese Coolies pouring in like ants to find work on railroad projects. Mixed in with them was a veritable army of Rum Runners cashing in on the faulty logic of the Volstead Act. It wasn't long before the ad-hoc batch of deputized cowboys, Texas Rangers and local sheriffs, known as the Mounted Guard, was overwhelmed. It quickly became apparent that a force with a unified command and mandate was needed.

As the Constitution places responsibility for securing the nation's borders on the Federal government, it fell to Washington to do something. Because of peacetime drawdowns, the regular Army was out of the question. What was needed was more along the lines of a law enforcement agency, and so, on 28 May 1924, the U.S. Border Patrol was born.

Originally under the Department of Labor, the U.S. Border Patrol embarked on a long road of improvisation, adaptation and enforcement. When the agency first started recruiting, there was no standardized entrance test, so the Rail Road Civil Service exam was adopted with a Spanish primer attached. Initial salary was \$1,800 a year with a horse provided by the agency.

Equipment was also an ad-hoc affair and agents were free to choose their own armaments. When that soon proved to be a supply nightmare, an official weapons list was adopted. Included were Winchester's in .44, slide action shotguns in .12 gauge, the Savage M99 .22 caliber and the Mossberg M800 in .308 (a U.S. agency first). Sidearms included Colt's .38 Police Positive and then the New Colt Service Revolver in .38, as well as snubnose Detectives for undercover work.

Border Patrol aviation is also a branch of the agency that has seen a colorful collection of assets. The first use of aircraft came unofficially in

1926, when two agents who knew how to fly "borrowed" an Army JN3 and conducted experiments spotting for ground units. With radios not available until 1936, communication was served by the old WWI method of throwing messages overboard. The concept worked, but the agency didn't receive official air assets until 1940, and that in the form of 3 Kellet YGIB Gyro Copters. In 1946 they received a number of surplus L-5 Stinson "Grasshoppers" but over the years, if it flew, it was used. At one time or another, USBP aviation has fielded everything from Beechcraft Bonanzas to Grumman Ducks.

Today, Border patrol aviation units primarily fly the Piper JA-18 "Super Cub" and surplus OH-6 recon choppers or "Loaches." Ground agents speak in awe of the many Vietnam-vintage pilots in the service. Tales abound of them flying into washes, under power lines, around radio towers and even cutting sign at night from ten feet off the deck. Rarely does anything escape their attention, and many times groups of entrants simply surrender to the helos and wait for ground units.

Throughout the years, the agency has also been involved in missions that are apart from the scope of illegal entrance. In June 1940, the service was transferred from Labor to the Department of Justice and the INS. Thus, during WWII, Border Patrol air, sea and land units pulled submarine watch along the Florida and Gulf Coasts. Also, many agents found themselves guarding German POWs and Japanese internees at INS-run camps across the U.S.

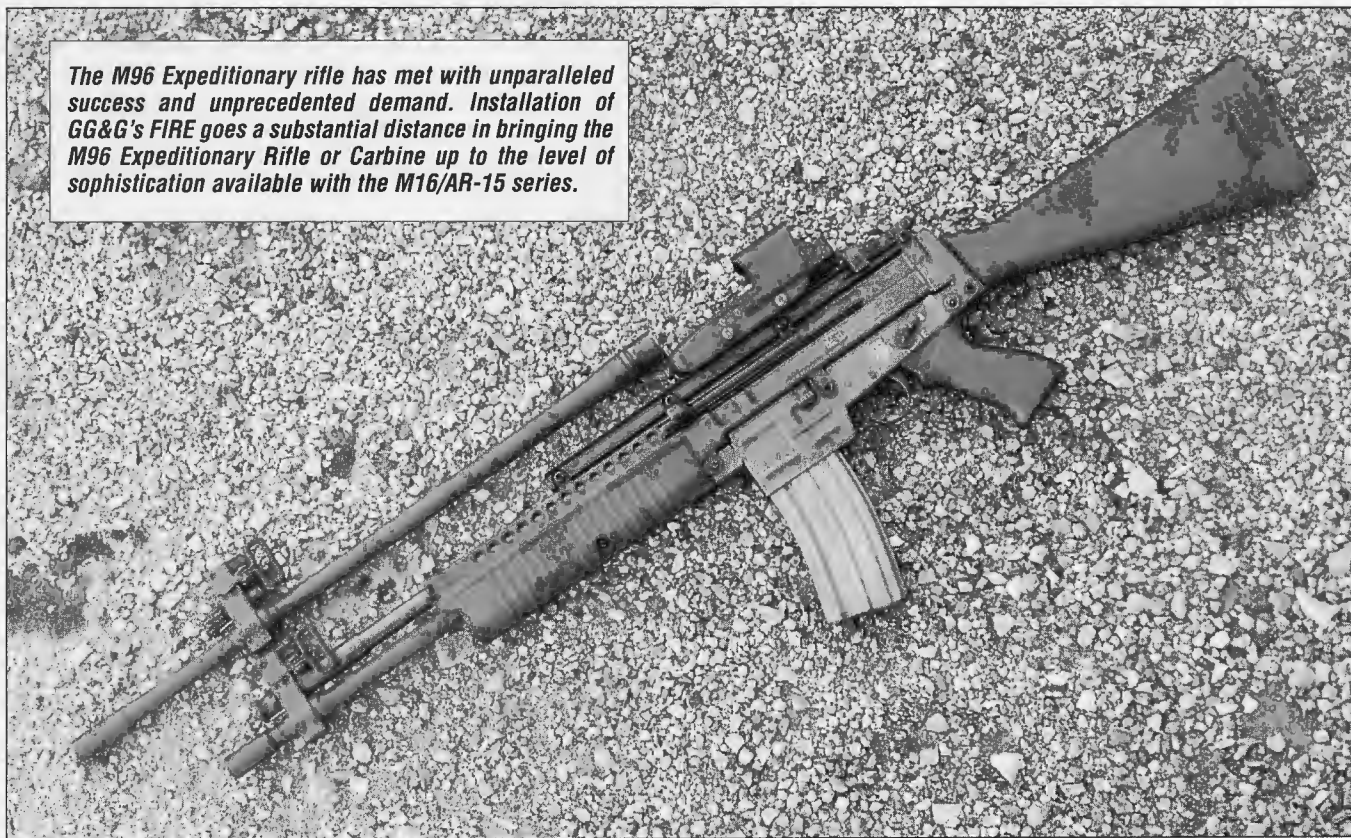
While today the Border Patrol doesn't maintain its own holding facilities, they do continue to work with all branches of law enforcement, and cooperation is rated as excellent. As their grandfathers did, the agency continues to evolve in its tactics and equipment and carries out the mission to protect the physical borders of the U.S. Mandated to stop those who would enter illegally or smuggle contraband, the U.S. Border Patrol keeps up a constant vigil, rain or shine, 365 days a year.

omega PROVINGround

M96 Carbine

Text & Photos by
Peter G. Kokalis

The M96 Expeditionary rifle has met with unparalleled success and unprecedented demand. Installation of GG&G's FIRE goes a substantial distance in bringing the M96 Expeditionary Rifle or Carbine up to the level of sophistication available with the M16/AR-15 series.



Since its introduction little more than a year ago, the M96 Expeditionary rifle (Robinson Armament Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 16776, Salt Lake City, UT 84116-0776; phone: 801-355-0401; fax: 801-355-0402; website: www.robarm.com) has met with unparalleled success and unprecedented demand. First of all, it's a politically correct firearm that meets the BATF's current criteria for an acceptable domestically produced, semiautomatic-only "sporting" rifle. It has no flash hider or bayonet lug. Further, it accepts all M16/AR15-type magazines. The trigger mechanism is based upon those of the highly reliable Garand and Kalashnikov.

Also, it has a 12-position adjustable gas regulator patterned after that of the FN FAL. With the gas bleed port completely closed off, all of the system's available energy is used to drive the reciprocating components rearward during the recoil stroke. This will invariably result in increased wear on the parts and eventual failure. The gas regulator should be adjusted so that empty cases are propelled no more than about 7 to 10 feet from the rifle. This will ensure reliable functioning and minimize unnecessary wear.

Finally, there are several important features on the M96 Expeditionary Rifle that are more than a little reminiscent of the Stoner 63A system. Most important is the modular concept common to both. The M96 can be instantly converted in the field into a carbine configuration. The carbine conversion kit is now available and one was recently sent to *Soldier Of Fortune* for test and evaluation. It consists of a 17-inch barrel with gas block and a new regulator system. The suggested retail price is \$299.99. The method by which the M96 barrel locks to the receiver is also quite similar to that of the Stoner 63A.

To install the barrel, first, remove the magazine and then rack the slide several times to remove any round in the chamber. Inspect the chamber in both a visual and tactile manner. Then, and only then, proceed as follows. Set the butt of the rifle on a secure surface with the muzzle pointing upward in a safe direction. Retract the cocking handle toward the rear of the receiver about 3 inches. Push in the spring-loaded barrel release button as far as possible and continue to hold down on it. With your third hand (or preferably that of another person) grasp the barrel at the gas block and rotate the barrel back and forth while pulling it up and out of the receiver.

In almost every regard this is an outstanding rifle and deserves all the success it has achieved. However, as issued from the factory, the M96 Expeditionary Rifle/Carbine cannot match the almost bewildering array of potential improvements and enhancements that can be attached to, or modified on, today's M16.

GG&G (Dept. SOF, 3602 East 42nd Stravenue, Tucson, AZ 85713; phone: 520-748-7167; fax: 520-748-7583; e-mail: gggaz@aol.com) removed both the rear and front sight assemblies from our M96 and installed what they call the "FIRE" (Fully Integrated Rifle Enhancement) System. This includes any or all of the following as required by the end user: MAD folding emergency rear sight, folding front sight, a dedicated M96 full-length Mil-Standard 1913 interface rail, and standard Aimpoint rings.



Essential components of the GG&G FIRE System include a Mil-Standard 1913 interface rail and the MAD rear folding sight.

The Mil-Standard 1913 interface rail installed on our M96 receiver, made from a machined billet of 6061 T6 aircraft-grade aluminum alloy, costs \$100 and includes all of the mounting hardware. To this we attached an EOTech HDS Holographic sight.

The MAD folding rear sight was originally developed to fulfill a request from Naval Surface Warfare for a back up iron sight that provided both a large and small aperture on the same plane and would thus be zeroed to the same point of impact. The MAD has four apertures, two of each size (so that rotating the aperture in either direction will bring the next size into view). The small aperture diameter is 0.073-inch and the large

aperture is 0.199-inch in diameter. It uses the standard Colt windage knob and windage screw. One click of the windage knob provides approximately 0.48 MOA change when mounted on the M96 Expeditionary rifle and about 0.65 MOA on the M96 carbine.

The MAD mount body is manufactured from 6061 T6



GG&G folding front sight comes with a standard 1.25-inch, ambidextrous sling swivel.

aluminum, hard anodized per milspec. The stem and aperture disc are made from 4140 steel, black magnesium phosphated per milspec. The MAD overhangs the rear of the receiver by 0.200-inch. This provides a lip so that the sight can be easily deployed even with a gloved hand. The unit locks in the up and down position with a positive detent. Whether you're deploying with an EOTech Holographic Diffraction Sight or an Aimpoint red dot sight, what you most certainly do not want in the center of your image is the M96 Expeditionary rifle's or carbine's front sight. The answer to that dilemma is to have it completely removed and replaced with a GG&G folding front sight. Made of 4140 chrome moly steel and finished by a milspec manganese phosphate process, this rugged unit uses the M16A2 square front post, which is adjustable for elevation zero, with protective ears that are provided with gripping serrations to more easily raise and lower the sight assembly. Further, the sight now comes with a standard 1¼-inch, ambidextrous sling swivel. The cost of both the GG&G MAD rear sight and folding front sight assembly installed is \$267.

Installation of GG&G's FIRE system together with the red dot, optical or holographic sight of your choice, goes a substantial distance in bringing the M96 Expeditionary Rifle or Carbine up to the level of sophistication available with the M16/AR-15 series. ☒

2001

A SHOT Odyssey

Saving Private Enterprise

BY FRANK W. JAMES

The SHOT Show is the industry trade show for the firearms industry, so it naturally raised more than a few questions and explanations as to why the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) would schedule the main industry trade show in New Orleans for the year 2001?

New Orleans, remember, initiated just two years ago the first civil damage harassment lawsuit that was followed in lemming-style fashion from multiple cities against many, if not all, of the large firearms manufacturers?

The answer it seems lies with the state legislature in Louisiana. After New Orleans first sued the gun manufacturers, the SHOT Show scheduled to

go there the following year cancelled and moved at the last minute to Las Vegas. The Louisiana Legislature then passed a law prohibiting cities from suing firearms manufacturers and applied it retroactively to New Orleans. This was followed by a personal letter from the governor of the state to the NSSF asking them to reconsider their fair state and the city of New Orleans as a site for a gathering that is openly recognized as one of the 10 largest trade shows in the United States (in terms of floor display space) and among the top 50 trade shows in the world.

Predictably, New Orleans took issue with the new law, brought suit and two weeks after the 2001 SHOT Show ended the case was scheduled to go before the Louisiana Supreme Court to determine if this "You Can't Do That" law is constitutional.

Why is all this important in a report on the show itself? Because it helps explain why most of us silly enough to attend were treated like displaced refugees when we were staying in a city suing most of the people we consider close friends or were sent to report on and cover.

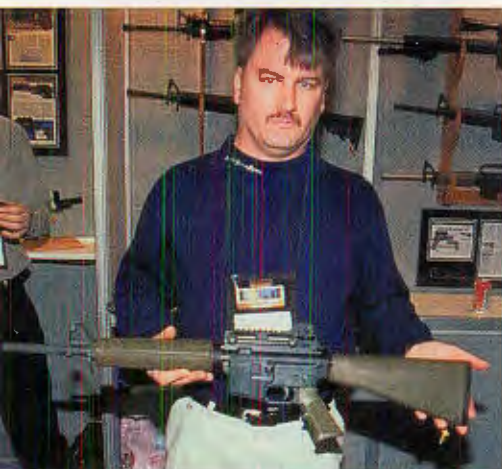
If ever there is an investigation into a price-fixing conspiracy or simple collusion, the hotel managers of New Orleans would have good reason to run and hide, or at the very least plead the Fifth Amendment. The week the SHOT Show began hotel room rates skyrocketed and



Tom Marx, of Michaels of Oregon, holds not a Smart Gun, but a Smart Holster. This is the Pro-4 ID holster that scans an individual's fingerprint and will only release the gun to an authorized user.

service declined. It probably would have been cheaper to rent a Lexus and sleep in it all week. That is, if you could have found a good place to park it.

More than one convention attendee mentioned their three- to four-star overnight abode rationed hot water like a third world country. One wag said he wasn't worried about a hot shower in his downtown New Orleans hotel simply because his place didn't have any clean towels.



Chuck Larson, of Rock River Arms, Inc., holds one of his company's AR15-style rifles.

Anyway, arriving in town early for this year's show wasn't necessary because the customary pre-show events put on in the past by various manufacturers had all been cancelled. Reason? There was no place nearby to shoot and demo their products. Small wonder. Naturally, according to the Murphy's Law of journalism we arrived a full day ahead of the show and had to find something worthwhile to kill some time, if not our expense account.

The Main Event

The SHOT Show, though, is the main story and an essential part of the American firearms scene. The scarcity of new products was noticeable and again we can only credit the lawsuits or the threat of impending lawsuits for sucking money away from worthwhile R&D projects. Examine how much money has been wasted on building an impossible smart gun when everyone knows the technology simply doesn't exist currently to achieve these mandated design parameters in a handgun?

But, one company has taken a step on their own and developed not a Smart Gun, but rather a Smart Holster! Tom Marx, of Michaels of Oregon, demonstrated the revolutionary Pro-4 ID holster. Designed for police-duty wear, this holster scans the individual's fingerprint and will only release the gun to an authorized user. There is a pocket on the outside of the holster where the officer sticks his finger and thereby places the fingertip on a small scanner.

Powered by three AA batteries, the microprocessor employs an infrared sensor to scan the fingerprint and checks it against up to 64 different prints stored in its memory. It then releases the pistol when it determines there is a match.

Okay, how about cuts, abrasions and blood? You know cops sometimes suffer these injustices and injuries. No problem, because the microprocessor



This 5-inch Government Model 1911 pistol is from High Standard. The "G-Man" features a stainless steel barrel and a National Match bushing, as well as a tuned 4-1/2 pound trigger.



This SR90 from the Robar Companies was the winning rifle in a recent Sniper Shootout competition. The SR90 from Robar is a premium-grade precision rifle that is guaranteed to deliver 1/2 minute M.O.A.



(above) Anzio Ironworks Corp offers this .50 caliber (BMG) take-down rifle that stores in a briefcase. It comes with a 17" barrel and the gun can be assembled in under 25 seconds.

(left) The Bushmaster XM15E2S "AK Shorty" seen here on the bottom of this display features an "AK"-style muzzle brake permanently attached to the end of the barrel. This should eliminate the blinding and deafness currently experienced by anyone any .223 rifle without a muzzle brake.

doesn't take a picture of the fingerprint, but actually plots recognition points across the surface of any programmed finger. It is also able to read through frost, condensation and a variety of other conditions, except for gloves — obviously.

Right now, the holster is rather large and bulky and it carries a backup power supply in the event of a dead battery. Among future optional features is a failsafe lock opened by a handcuff key if both power supplies fail. The microprocessor is programmed with a laptop computer.

Marx reported they are examining this same technology for application in the civilian sector as homeowner gun safes. Bolt the device to the headboard and don't worry about the kids getting the gun, unless of course they learn how to program your laptop and the gunsafe's microprocessor.

Three Firearms Trends

As for firearms seen at the SHOT Show, three trends are plainly visible to anyone even faintly knowledgeable about guns at present.

The first thing is everyone, and we mean *everyone* seems to be building a 1911 pistol. The United States military may have selected a 9mm pistol 15 years ago, but the popularity of the .45 caliber 1911 pistol is probably greater now than it ever has been.

The companies marketing, importing or making the traditional 1911 pistol, but not limited to the following (we may have missed some) include: Springfield Armory, Kimber, High Standard, Ithaca, Dan Wesson, Les Baer Custom, Inc., Caspian Arms, Ltd., Wilson Combat, Auto-Ordnance, Nowlin Custom Manufacturing, Olympic Arms, Inc., Rock River Arms, Inc., Israel Arms International, and Pacific Armament

Corporation (a company importing guns from the Philippines). This list does not include the designs that are variations of the traditional 1911 pistol like those produced by STI International, or Para-Ordnance Manufacturing Inc.

And, oh yeah, it also doesn't include that outfit in Hartford, Connecticut which made the 1911 pistol in the first place — Colt Manufacturing Company, Inc. 1911 pistols have literally become as common in the defensive arms marketplace as agricultural commodities like wheat, cotton, or soybeans on the Chicago Board of Trade.

Notable among the non-1911 handguns were a new polymer Kahr pistol in .40 S&W caliber from Kahr Arms. It looks good and handles better, even if the .40-caliber version has a thicker slide to increase its mass and slow down its slide velocity. North American Arms, Inc., has a tiny new .380 which should work well if all proper gentlemen start wearing vests under their suitcoats again. Walther U.S.A., has introduced a new .22 rimfire pistol based upon the P99 that is both clever, neat, small and get this — cheap! It will supposedly retail for \$199 with one barrel, but the first versions will be available with two barrels, one will be 3-1/2" in length and the other compensated (why?), for the total price of only \$299. Sturm, Ruger & Co., introduced a Bird's Head grip for the Vacquero (Yee-hah!) and there was every variation of a cowboy gun imaginable from different manufacturers and importers being peddled by buckeroos from up and down the eastern seaboard.

The second trend that is easily noticeable is the proliferation of companies marketing AR15-style rifles. Les Baer, demonstrated to us the forgings he makes for his new AR15 rifle and, yes, they are his forgings because he went out and purchased his own forging plant just to make his own upper and lower receivers. The quality is excellent, but then Les Baer has always put an emphasis on quality. His primary aim with the Les Baer Ultimate AR .223 rifle is varmint hunting, but his catalog lists models for law enforcement as well as 1-in-7-inch and 1-in-9-inch barrel twist rates in addition to his standard varmint barrel twist rate of 1-in-12-inch.

Bushmaster, is another firm producing some impressive looking AR15-style rifles. One that particularly caught our eye was the Bushmaster "DCM" Competition Rifle. Built to meet all the requirements of the DCM Competition rules this rifle features

"micro-aperature" peep sights and a 20-inch extra heavy competition barrel with a 1-in-8-inch rate of twist.

Another Bushmaster worth examining is the Bushmaster XM15E2S "AK Shorty" Carbine. Since threaded muzzles are now *verboten* everyone shooting these things has been blinded and deafened by the muzzle flash from non-compensated barrels. Well, the Bushmaster "AK Shorty" Carbine has the "AK" style muzzle brake permanently attached to the end of the barrel to comply with the law and the result should be a lot easier on the operator.

By far the most technically advanced AR15-style rifle is the one offered by Professional Ordnance, Inc. They are the manufacturers of the Carbon-15-type of semi-auto rifles. Their latest model is the Type 97S.A, which weighs only 4.3 pounds and features a full length one-piece machined 'Scout' extended Picatinny Rail. Carbon fiber is extremely strong and lightweight. Its origins were in the aerospace industry, but Indianapolis racecars and Formula One cars have relied upon this technology for almost two decades. Professional Ordnance also offers a law-enforcement only select-fire version which weighs less than 4 pounds.

For those who enjoy a little nostalgia, High Standard, is producing a faithful reproduction of the World War Two M-1 Carbine. Described as a classic WWII design their M1 Carbine features a parkerized finish and a 10-round magazine. High Standard is also manufacturing a semi-auto gas-operated .50 cal. (BMG) rifle.

Heavy Hitters

Fifties are the third trend we noticed at this year's SHOT Show. They were everywhere. The High Standard Fifty is the Robert Pauza design that's been around for a couple of years and it comes in two versions, rifle and carbine.

Anzio Ironworks Corp., even had a take-down .50 BMG rifle that fit inside a briefcase. It comes with a 17" barrel and the customer can specify either a military or a match chamber. The brochure claims the gun can be assembled in under 25 seconds and disassembled in the same amount of time to fit back inside its briefcase-style carrying case.

E.D.M. ARMS, also had a takedown .50 BMG rifle on display. Called the XM107 Windrunner, it is a bolt-action lightweight tactical .50 BMG rifle. They guarantee 1 MOA with match grade or

Continued on page 91

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website: www.professional-ordnance.com.

High Standard

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Arsenal

5015 West Sahara Ave., Suite 125, Dept. SOF
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phone: 888-539-2220; fax: 702-643-2055

D&S GUNS

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LiteTek, Inc.

P.O. Box 245, Dept. SOF
Medway, MA 02053
phone: 508-533-0203; website: litetek.com

REWARDS FOR JUSTICE

You Can Win \$5 Million!

Editor's note: The following text is reprinted in part from Washington File, a site produced and maintained by the U.S. Department of State; web site: <http://www.usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/99129502.htm>.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has made public two web sites where information about Usama bin Laden is available. Information about bin Laden's involvement in the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya can be found at <http://www.fbi.gov/majcases/eastafrica/proct8.htm>. The U.S. indictment against bin Laden can be found at <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/nyfo/pressrels/1998/11041998.htm>.

The Taliban Movement of Afghanistan, led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, continues to provide safe haven to the indicted terrorist Usama bin Laden. Spokesman for the Taliban and its mass media continue the misinformation campaign that no one has provided the Taliban with proof of bin Laden's alleged crimes.

According to the rule of law as practiced by the international community of nations, a judge and jury determine proof of guilt based on evidence submitted during a trial.

Extensive evidence exists against Usama bin Laden and his collaborators. This evidence is public information available to all, including the Taliban, at two internet web sites [listed above].

As a result of extensive criminal investigation, and working closely with Kenya, Tanzania, and other nations, the U.S. Government has indicted or filed criminal complaints against bin Laden and 16 of his associates for their involvement in the two bombings and other terrorist crimes.

FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE			
MURDER OF U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES; CONSPIRACY TO MURDER U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES; ATTACK ON A FEDERAL FACILITY RESULTING IN DEATH			
USAMA BIN LADEN			
			
Date of Photograph Unknown			
Aliases: Usama Bin Muhammad Bin Ladin, Sheikh Usama Bin Ladin, the Prince, the Emir, Abu Abdallah, Moghidi Sheikh, Hag, the Director			
DESCRIPTION			
Date of Birth:	1957	Race:	Brown
Place of Birth:	Saudi Arabia	Eyes:	Brown
Height:	5'4" to 5'6"	Complexion:	Olive
Weight:	Approximately 100 pounds	Sex:	Male
Build:	Thin	Nationality:	Saudi Arabian
Occupation:	Unknown		
Remarks:	Leader of a terrorist organization known as AlQaida "The Base". He walks with a cane.		
Scars and Marks:	None		
CAUTION			
USAMA BIN LADEN IS WANTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE AUGUST 7, 1998, BOMBINGS OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSIES IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA AND NAIROBI, KENYA. THESE ATTACKS KILLED OVER 200 PEOPLE.			
CONSIDERED A RISK AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS			
IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE OR THE NEAREST U.S. EMBASSY OR CONSULATE.			
REWARD			
The United States Government is offering a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading directly to the apprehension or conviction of Usama Bin Laden.			

MURDER

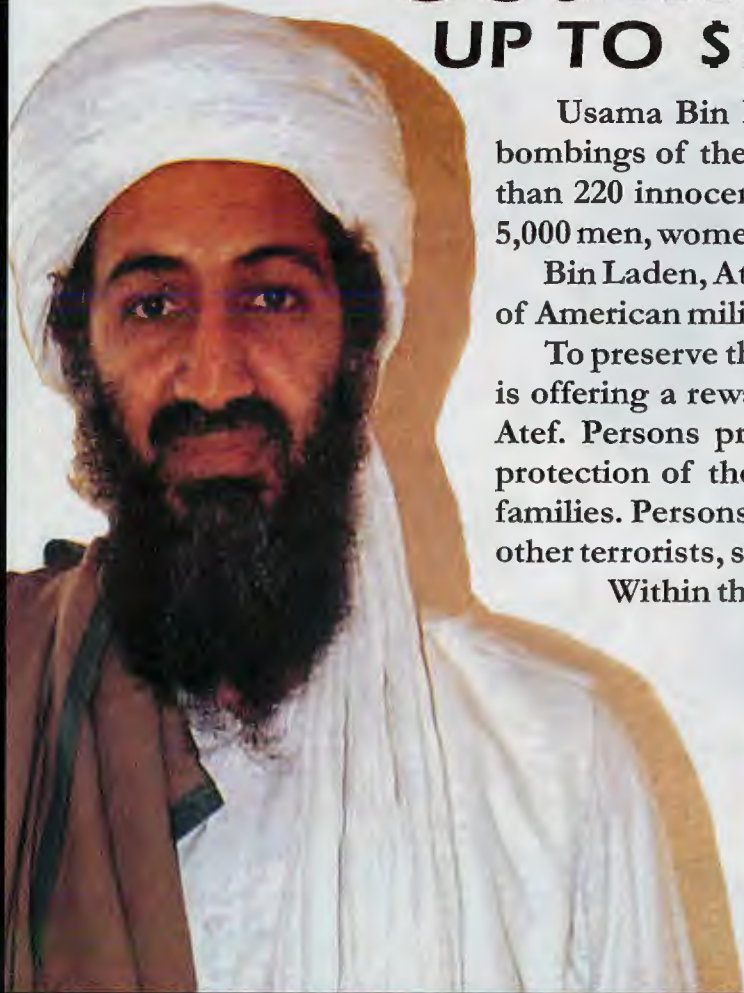


Nairobi & Dar es Salaam bombings, 1998
220 killed and 5,000 wounded

MURDERER

Usama Bin Laden

UP TO \$5 MILLION REWARD



Usama Bin Laden and Muhammad Atef have been indicted for the August 7, 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. These brutal attacks killed more than 220 innocent Americans, Kenyans and Tanzanians and seriously injured more than 5,000 men, women and children.

Bin Laden, Atef, and their organization, al Qaeda, also allegedly conspired in the killings of American military personnel in Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

To preserve the peace and save innocent lives from further attacks, the U.S. Government is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Bin Laden and Atef. Persons providing information may be eligible for a reward of up to \$5 million, protection of their identities, and may be eligible for relocation of themselves and their families. Persons wishing to report information on Usama Bin Laden, Muhammad Atef, or other terrorists, should contact the authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Within the United States, contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation or call the U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service at 1-800-HEROES-1.

Information may also be provided by contacting:



REWARDS FOR JUSTICE

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Washington, D.C. 20090-6781 U.S.A.

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UP TO \$5 MILLION REWARD
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It's

an ugly word, mercenary. To some it conjures up images of mindless brutality, the murder of innocents.

To others, it's a noble call to arms for a just cause.

People forget that the supreme British military hero, General Gordon — he was killed at Khartoum by the Mahdi — was a mercenary. With government approval, he served under the Chinese Emperor and the Khedive of Egypt. Colonel Pulaski, hero of the American Revolution and the father of the American artillery corps, was a merc — as was Lafayette.

concept of being paid to fight is almost as old as history itself: It's the world's second oldest profession.

As I write, there are a lot of mercenaries out there killing people. They're active on both sides in the Congo, a country that has been torn apart by internecine war for more than a generation. Others are fighting in conflicts in Africa, Asia, South America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Not all causes are so easily delineated. South Africa's Islamic fundamentalist Qibla, the military wing of the Pagad movement for instance, has recruited people to go and fight in Palestine.

Their spokespeople say that they will help "liberate sacred ground from a hated enemy." The enemy, of course, is the Jew: Zionists. Now the argument devolves into dialectics because one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist.

Still, all this noise about causes, shrines, holy places and so on is not idle talk. These people are intent on liberating Islamic holy places from the "infidel." And if it means losing lives in the process, then so be it: For those who come unstuck, the next stop is paradise and the prospect, of course, of the promised 99 vestal virgins. It's diffi-

WAR DOGS

Today's Mercs In Action

BY AL J. VENTER

The small group of South African mercenaries attached to the ignominiously named Executive Outcomes who went into Sierra Leone in 1995 and brought that country back from the brink are proud of what they did. Speak to those involved today and they'll tell you about the lives they saved, the mindless amputations that they were instrumental in stopping and the fact that they eventually drove the rebel leader Foday Sankoh — a megalomaniac and a killer, but a leader nevertheless — to the negotiating table.

To others in the business of "hired guns," the cause is irrelevant. It's all a question of money. Like it or not, the



(opposite) The face of war in Africa — complete with ubiquitous AK. (inset) Gunship pilot's view of Freetown, Sierra Leone at dusk, now swollen by a million refugees who have fled there because RUF rebels control most of the interior. (above) Although much of the killing is based on ancient tribal hatred, African wars are fought over control of the wealth. This is a good view of Sierra Leone's diamond fields, shot from the front cockpit of Nellis' Mi-24 gunship, the only one operational in Sierra Leone.

cult to label that kind of zealot a soldier of opportunity.

Fighting For A Paycheck

Ideologues apart, today's war dogs come from many countries, among them Germany, Australia, Croatia, Britain, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Ukraine, Namibia and elsewhere. Their cause is transparent, defined by a monthly bank deposit and often coupled to the promise of being able to mine concessions somewhere in the interior, property or booty. In recent years that's been the case with Angola, the Congo and Sierra Leone and a few other places where diamonds and precious metals are a common denominator.

When the violence in Kosovo was at its worst, experienced soldiers from many armies fought for one side or the other, most times for a pittance. Some did it as much for the thrill of combat as for the experience. All were labeled mercenaries.

The same doesn't hold for Iraqi fighter pilots at the controls of jet bombers attached to the Sudanese Air



The streets of the diamond town of Koidu, now in rebel hands.

Force. They, in contrast, are paid well for their services, on top of which they avoid the rigorous hardships that UN sanctions have imposed on their own country. There are numerous reports of these airmen dropping bombs (and in several cases, deadly nerve agents) on

the heads of groups of Nilotic recalitrants who would rather be dead than subject to the vagaries of Islam.

So, too, in Chechnya. And with Pakistan's *Hizbul Mujahadeen* that has been fighting the Indian Army in mountainous Kashmir with "recruits" that come from a dozen countries including Afghanistan, Yemen and the Philippines.

Mercenary helicopter pilots have recently been active in such diverse destinations as Sri Lanka, Liberia Angola, Columbia and Sierra Leone. Quite a few of them are my friends and I've gone into combat with some of them.

Equal Opportunity — If Not Equal Pay

There was a time when the majority of Mercenaries were all white, or at least of European or American extraction. Today there are 10 times as many black soldiers of fortune being paid to fight in Africa. More of their Arab brethren are active in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Many of these fighters don't have entrenched religious convictions. Quite a few — including some of those fighting today in Chechnya and Afghanistan — believe in nothing except creating mayhem.

A handful tower above the rest. Rolf Steiner, a German and former French Foreign Legionnaire whom I met in Biafra called himself "The Last Adventurer." He espoused causes, usu-



Author (right) during the brief impasse between Colonial rule and the bitter quarter-century-long civil war that followed in Angola in 1975. He had briefly joined Chipa Esquadrao, a rebel unit opposed to the Marxist Luanda government, to get his story. His beard wasn't gray then!

ally that of the underdog. Steiner fought in Algeria, Biafra and finally for the same primitive tribes people that the Iraqis are bombing in the Sudan. There he was captured, put on a very public trial in Khartoum and sentenced to four years in jail.

It's instructive that had he not been white, Rolf Steiner would probably have been shot, as was another of his contemporaries, the mercenary psychopath "Colonel" Callan in Angola. In his stupidity, Callan, a Cypriot Greek whose real name was Costas Georgiou, caused the death in an ambush spearheaded by Cuban regulars, of another of my friends, George Bacon.

My old friend Peter McAleese, as tough a Scot as they come, and who has seen action on four continents — including a spell with Britain's Parachute Regiment and the SAS — was fighting for the rebels in north Angola at the time. His only regret is that he didn't ice Callan when he had the chance. As a merc, McAleese has been to war in Rhodesia, with the South African Defence Force and a couple of places that he'd rather not talk about. His closest brush with destiny came when he tried to assassinate Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar.

I had been with McAleese during the border war days down south. Intelligence had pinpointed a SWAPO guerrilla base near the town of Cuamato and I asked to be included among those who were to make a frontal strike on the strongpoint. I was attached to his unit for the duration. While it was all routine enough and I thought it would be a breeze, it turned out different. There were two or three of our boys killed and a lot more



Author on ops in the Sierra Leone jungle with Executive Outcomes. At his left is field commander and former SA Airborne Colonel Cobus Claassens. Venter doesn't usually carry, but in the jungle, he felt he couldn't just wave a press card if somebody came at him out of the undergrowth with an AK.

wounded. I almost got blown away through my own stupidity, but that's another story.

The attack took all morning and we had to move forward from one rebel trenchline to another, clearing as we went. In-between I took cover with the rest of the squad with my head down because of incoming. Not McAleese. Even though they were hurling stuff at us all the time, he would strut up and down above where we had taken cover, prepping us for the next move.

Utterly fearless and totally in character, he hurled as many insults as orders at us until we were able, finally, to take the position. About 50 of the

enemy were killed, the majority of them taken out by the gunships. McAleese's book *No Mean Soldier*, published by Orion in London a few years ago, has put some of that together, with many of his other exploits. It's still one of the best of the genre.

Good, Bad, Ugly

Interestingly, he also lays bare one of the reasons why soldiers of fortune have got such a bad name. In the book he details the catastrophe surrounding events leading up to a foiled effort to counter Castro's advances into Angola in the mid-seventies. It was a disaster.

A mainly British force — many of them without any military training — were hired by a shady bunch of freebooters in London, flown to the Congo and then immediately shipped across the border into Angola's north. There they awaited the arrival of one of the biggest armored columns seen in Africa since the end of World War II. Cuban led, the Angolan army gave his northern opposition a thrashing from which it has never recovered.

The results make for grim reading and were so predictable that you wouldn't have found anyone in Las Vegas willing to put odds on the outcome. At the end of it, nearly half of the 143 mercenaries who originally went into Africa from London were either killed, wounded or missing. Having failed to acquit themselves against government forces, their schizoid leaders, headed by Callan, exe-



Executive Outcomes commander "Pine" Pienaar (in bushhat) at a passing out parade of Sierra Leone trainees in 1996. At his right is his sergeant major, and behind are EO NCOs. A professional lot, all.

cuted 14 of their own. Of those taken prisoner by the Angolans, four, including the American Danny Gearhart and Callan, were executed.

Of course the media splashed this dismal episode worldwide, especially the part about mercenaries shooting each other. Murray Davies of London's *Daily Mirror* was subsequently taken to north Angola where it had all happened and he reported "I saw the horror of Massacre Valley."

The way McAleese tells it, the event is a textbook version of how not to fight freelance wars. He, together with those who managed to get back across the border into the Congo a couple of days after the final MPLA thrust, were very lucky to be alive. Among them was Robin Wright, one of my American colleagues from *The Los Angeles Times*. As she told the story, she got out by a whisker. Having had enough of Africa, Robin went on to write some remarkable books about Iran.

Earning a Bad Name — For Everybody

The mercenary ideal, already wonky from excesses committed by South African soldiers of fortune fighting for 5 Commando and others in the Congo, has not recovered the almost glamorous mystique that these people enjoyed before. It also remains one of several reasons why Western governments continue to be opposed to private military companies (PMCs) getting involved in African — or any other — wars. The opportunity for abuse, as one British minister put it, predominates. When it happens, he said, it was impossible to ignore the violence that it inculcated. Invariably it was white on black, which, in the post-Colonial era, he said, was reprehensible and totally indefensible.

Looking at some of the events surrounding the Angolan tragedy, it's difficult to argue against that logic.

Yet, there are some war dogs of distinction, and if we don't like what they do, we cannot help admiring their verve. The most notable individual in the profession of hired guns must surely be Bob Denard, a Frenchman who has made a career of involving himself in trouble spots that have included Togo, Chad, Biafra, Angola, Mobutu Sese Seko's Congo and five or six others.

Finally, he and a small band of 40 "volunteers" sailed all the way from France and, by force, took possession of an Indian Ocean archipelago. The miracle is that the old rust bucket they sailed in made it: They went around a stormy Cape of Good Hope.

The rest is history.

Having killed the local demagogue, who, in any event, was mad — one of his last public declarations was that his people should pray to him and not Allah — Denard declared himself boss. Sensitive to public opinion, and to appease local sentiment in this staunchly Muslim island state, he quickly converted to Islam. Not long afterward he married one of the local beauties and raised a family. Finally, after the French Navy drove him out, he took refuge in South Africa before returning to France to stand trial.

I visited Denard on Grande Comores at his lovely villa on the north of the main island while he was still in power. I'd intended to make a televi-



Arch War Dog Peter McAleese (seen here, wearing British Airborne smock) as he clears bunker during operation in South Angola. He went on to fight drug barons in Colombia, probably on behalf of the Company.

sion documentary about the place, but that was impossible without his blessing. So I sought the help of another of his old buddies, former submarine flotilla commander Rear Admiral Theo Honiball, who had gotten to know the old man in France while taking delivery of a squadron of Daphne subs for the South African Navy.

As things work in this shadowy world of spooks and favors, Theo obliged and wrote a letter of introduction, which I presented to Denard's office the morning after my arrival in Moroni, the Comorian capital. Though the hawk-eyed Frenchman was skeptical to begin with, I was warmly welcomed once formalities had been cleared. We became friends afterward and he even approached me later in Johannesburg in a bid to have his story published in the

English-speaking world. Unfortunately, I couldn't help.

One of the first questions I'm usually asked when I speak about Denard — the archetypal mercenary — is what was he like? Was he really the fire-eater that so many of his enemies (and some of his friends) said he was? Did he eat babies for breakfast, as one asinine breakfast-show host once asked, not entirely tongue-in-cheek?

Classier Classics

I'd like to think that the answer sits, in part, with another of the old warriors of an age of which, I fear, we have seen the last. That man is Ron Reid-Daly — Uncle Ron to his friends — the original founder-commander of Rhodesia's

Selous Scouts, which, in its day, was one of the finest combat units in any man's army. Interestingly, their roots within their respective military establishments go deep, Denard with the French and Reid-Daly, who served with enough distinction in Britain's SAS in Malaya to be awarded a medal by the Queen. There aren't many rebels who can sport an MBE.

In many respects the two men are a lot alike, though "Uncle Ron" would offer you a feisty "bunch of fives" if you were to call him a merc. Both men had outstanding military careers, both share an encyclopedic knowledge of history and they are also gentlemen in the traditional mold. Whenever my wife entered the room, they would get up until she was seated. Also they've kept themselves astonishingly fit, well into old age.

More important, perhaps, both Denard and Reid-Daly clearly comprehended the dynamics of conflict: They understood the men under their command, which made them the leaders they were. They could ask them to do anything, and when push became shove, they did so. In brief, these two old war-horses stood out in the crowd. Even their enemies would sometimes defer to them.

Reid-Daly went on to command the armed forces of South Africa's now defunct Transkei Government. His second-in command in Umtata, interestingly, was an American Vietnam vet by the name of Bob MacKenzie who, as the first white commander of a Sierra Leone combat group since the end of World



Craig G. Grico

(above) Justice Sierra Leone street style! After being shot, a man is hacked to pieces. (left) Flashback to mercs in the Rhodesian War: American mercenary Dave McGrady (with M16) during the '70s: He headhunted gooks in Matabeleland for more than a year.



War II, was later killed in Sierra Leone.

In the world of the international "hired gun," there have been some substantial changes, not all of them savory. Where there were governments before (or dissidents, wishing to replace the established status quo) the playing fields now include tyrants like Charles Taylor who rules Liberia. None of the horrific excesses that happened in Sierra Leone over the past decade could have taken place without his say-so.

A late UN report points to this despot as having hired Libyan, Ukrainian and South African mercenaries, together with regular soldiers from half-a-dozen African states to foster revolt across the border. The CNN television network in their remarkable documentary *Cry Freetown* pulled few punches when they showed us what the rebels were capable of. One of their favorite pastimes was laying bets on whether a boy or a girl would fall out when they gutted pregnant women.

Future Forecasts Not All Wholesome

So, too, in Colombia where South American drug barons have mustered squads of mercenaries to achieve paramilitary objectives. Indeed, according to a 70-page CIA report released in December, 2000 and titled *Global Trends 2015*, international affairs are likely to be increasingly determined by large and powerful organizations rather than governments, especially in the Third World.

Langley reckons that these could involve alliances between the most influential crime groups such as the Mafia and Chinese triads. The use of mercenaries is implicit in the muscle needed to implement these policies. The agency adds that their income will come from narcotics, alien smuggling, toxic materials and hazardous waste smuggling, illicit arms, military technologies etc.

The contemporary mercenary of the new millennium is sometimes a very

different animal from the ones who went before.

Some of the Serbs and Croats we encountered in the Congo were little more than thugs. Their military background was often rudimentary. Not a few were outspoken racists who insulted black officers and men alike, irrespective of the fact that they were the ones signing their checks each month.

What this does show is that even after almost half a century since the first of the black states was granted independence by various colonial powers, the white man in Africa today can still get away with a lot that he wouldn't consider trying elsewhere. This is one of the reasons why these people stay. Another is that the money invariably is good.

While Executive Outcomes (EO) was active in Sierra Leone and Angola, the men on the ground could expect to earn \$1,000 a month or more. The average (white) field commander took home about \$3,000 tax-free. White troops generally, were getting two to three times as much as their African counterparts and when asked about this disparity, their officers would answer that it was still five times what the African troops could achieve back home — if they could get a job!

While with EO, this tough bunch of bush fighters — people like former Recce Commander Hennie Blaauw, for-

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BARRETT'S ULTIMATE BIG BORE



M99 .50 Caliber – Long Range “Big Shot”

Text & Photos by Peter G. Hohalis

Fifty caliber rifles, both semiautomatic and bolt-action types, have certainly achieved a small, but significant degree of prominence in recent years in some highly specialized arenas. When the .50 caliber Browning heavy machine gun and its ammunition were developed during and shortly after World War I, the only perceived applications were for aircraft and against armored vehicles. However, in the interim between the two world wars advances in vehicle armor far outstripped the ability to design man-portable antitank guns to defeat them. By the beginning of World War II even 20mm antitank guns proved to be ineffective. But, the superb .50 caliber cartridge has lived on in John Browning's truly great heavy machine gun.



At 25 pounds, empty, the Barrett M99 is relatively lightweight by .50-caliber rifle standards.

iber precision rifles and ammunition capable of some rather astounding long-range accuracy.

Soldier Of Fortune recently obtained a .50 caliber precision rifle from Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1077, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1077; phone: 615-896-2938; fax: 615-896-7313; website www.barrettrifles.com; e-mail: mail@barrettrifles.com) for test and evaluation. Ronnie Barrett is a highly respected pioneer in the .50 caliber rifle arena. I can remember clearly Ronnie, a former professional photographer, personally demonstrating his first .50 caliber rifle, the semiautomatic Model 82 in 1985 at the Soldier Of Fortune Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. Somewhat modified this quickly became the Model 82A1 and was adopted by the U.S. military forces.

The Barrett Model 99, called the "Big Shot," weighs only 25 pounds (11.4 kg), empty. I say "only" because a decade ago I can remember shooting another single-shot .50 caliber bolt-

In recent years .50 caliber rifles, while completely ineffective against modern armor, have been used by the military principally for EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal). There have also been some special operations applications, as groups like Delta and the SEALs almost always get whatever toys they want. Legitimate law-enforcement applications for this

caliber are, in my opinion, few and far between. While the Makah Indian tribe recently employed a .50 caliber rifle in the first legal killing of a gray whale in American waters in nearly 75 years, the predominant civilian use for these rifles has been by a relatively small group of target shooters who pop paper at a range of 1,000 yards and more. This has resulted in the development of .50 cal-

History of the .50 Caliber BMG Cartridge

In April 1918, the U.S. War Department received an urgent cable from the commanding officer of the American Expeditionary Forces, General John J. Pershing, requesting the development of a high-power, large-caliber machine gun and ammunition, intended initially for aircraft use. Pershing was keenly aware that the British and French had made rapid strides in raising their machine-gun calibers from .303 and 8mm Lebel, respectively, to .50 caliber and larger.

Winchester sent a dummy round to John Browning at the Colt factory to use in his development of the gun, which was to retain all of the salient mechanical features of the .30 caliber M1917 water-cooled machine gun, but scaled-up and beefed-up to withstand the increased pressures. On 15 October 1918, the first .50 caliber machine gun was ready for trials at the proving ground. On its initial attempt 877 rounds were fired in bursts of 100 to 150 rounds each. The total time spent on this project by John Browning, from conception to successful firing, was little more than a year.

The development of the .50 caliber cartridge was not so straightforward and a great deal of confusion exists to this day concerning its early history. General Pershing had specified that the bullet was to weigh no less than 670 grains with a muzzle velocity of at least 2,700 fps.

Winchester Repeating Arms Co. was requested to develop a round that would be suitable for both machine-gun

and antitank use. By May of 1918 a .50 caliber rimmed bottleneck case was designed and both 508 and 707 grain bullets tested. It was no coincidence that Winchester was concurrently developing an antitank rifle for which a rimmed case would be ideal. However, by June 1918, a rimless cartridge case was developed to replace the rimmed case, as U.S. Ordnance thought it would function better in Browning's machine gun. An attempt to shorten the case was abandoned and on 1 October 1918 a supposed final form of the .50 caliber BMG round was confirmed.

However, for unknown reasons Frankford Arsenal decided in early 1919 to redesign the Winchester round using the German 13mm antitank cartridge as a basis. The result was a bottleneck, semi-rimmed case with a longer and heavier (800 grains) bullet. It was rejected and the Ordnance Office directed Frankford Arsenal to develop a rimless cartridge. By May 1919 this was accomplished by essentially scaling up the Model 1906 .30 caliber cartridge case. More or less in this form the .50 caliber BMG cartridge has lived on to become the finest heavy machine gun round ever fielded.

Over the years, bullet weights have varied from about 690 to 750 grains (with a steel core). By 1940, the muzzle velocity had been set at 2,700 fps, when fired through a 36-inch barrel. Bullet types have included ball, armor-piercing, armor-piercing incendiary tracer (APIT), tracer, incendiary

action behemoth that tipped the scales at more than 48 pounds. Overall length is 50.4 inches (1300 mm). The barrel is 33 inches (840 mm) in length. It has eight grooves and a right-hand twist of one turn in 15 inches. The muzzle brake is that used on other Barrett .50 caliber rifles, including the USMC's M82A3 and the U.S. Army's XM107 (known as the 95M on the civilian and international marketplaces). This proprietary device has demonstrated in quantitative studies an incredible reduction in recoil of 69%.

The M99 receiver body is an aluminum extrusion with an integral Mil-Standard 1913 scope base. The bolt extension, also an aluminum-alloy extrusion, has been welded to the aluminum buttplate, which is a casting. These components have been hard-coat anodized. The buttplate, which I found to be truly effective in absorbing the recoil impulse, has been made from a high energy absorbing elastomer called "Sorbothane."

The bolt mechanism on this rifle is not the conventional "shell holder" type as found on most single-shot .50 caliber rifles. The three modified but-



Fired from the bench the Barrett M99 produced ¼ MOA groups at 200 yards using match-grade ammo from Arizona Ammunition, Inc.

ress-thread-style locking lugs used on the M99 bolt are designed to withstand the high loads developed by .50-caliber ammunition (the bolt literally moves forward during the locking motion) then to also provide a mechanical advantage during unlocking so that primary extraction occurs. Buttress threads are commonly encountered on

power screws like those found in automotive jacks and milling machines, but this is a clever and innovative application.

The M99 rifle cocks when the bolt is lifted upward. The pistol grip is that of the M16 series and was in fact manufactured by Lone Star Ordnance in San Antonio, Texas. The safety lever,

and blank. Experimental types have included canister (shot), frangible, flash, high-explosive and lachrymatory (the explosive PETN and a small charge of tear gas).

The .50 caliber Browning heavy machine gun remains in service today with the U.S. Army. It will be found on the turret of the M1 Abrams main battle tank and on MBTs and armored fighting vehicles throughout the world. Its metric equivalent is 12.7x99mm. It is every bit the equal of the Russian 12.7x108mm round developed for the DShK M38 heavy machine gun. In recent years special purpose ammunition, such as the Norwegian Raufoss — which has a bullet filled with a hard core and RDX explosive, have extended both the life and applications of this venerable battle-proven cartridge.

Rifles chambered for the .50 caliber BMG cartridge have gained prominence in two applications in recent years. Ever since Desert Storm the U.S. military has employed .50 caliber rifles, both bolt-action and semiautomatic, principally for EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) in mine fields, although there have been minor applications for deployment against light-skinned vehicles and radar and communications installations.

Long-range target-shooting with .50 caliber rifles, mostly bolt-action types, has become increasingly popular with civilian competitors. This requires ammunition designed specifically for target shooting, as military-issue machine gun ammunition cannot come even close to matching the accuracy potential of these rifles.

All ammunition used in SOF's test and evaluation of the Barrett Model 99 rifle was provided by Arizona Ammunition, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 21421 North 14th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone: 623-516-9004; fax: 623-516-9012; website:

www.azammo.com or www.arizonaammunition.com), whose reputation in the field of custom long-range target ammunition is unexcelled.

The lot we tested was headstamped "PSD 96" (indicating manufacture by PMC - Poongsan Metal Corporation — in South Korea) and loaded with a moly-coated Hornady 750-grain A-MAX boat-tail bullet. This superb bullet features an aluminum tip, copper jacket and lead core. Referred to as a VLD (Very Low Drag) type, it starts to stabilize at between 200 and 300 yards. The U.S. Army has been using the Hornady 750-grain A-MAX at ranges out to 2,500 yards. For further information contact Hornady Manufacturing Company (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68803; phone: 308-382-1390; fax: 308-382-5761; website: www.hornady.com). The average muzzle velocity was 2,800 fps. Be advised that rifle bores through which moly-coated bullets are fired require special chemical cleaning procedures. Never use a bronze or steel bore brush. It will only remove the molybdenum disulfide coating.

Match-grade .50 caliber ammo from Arizona Ammunition also features hand-weighed powder charges, neck straightening of each case, special low-drag case chamfering, cases trimmed to the length required for a specific model rifle, deburred flash holes, and recut and squared primer pockets. Loaded ammunition is spot-checked for trueness and field tested for "rifle-specific" accuracy. You cannot purchase finer or more accurate .50 caliber ammunition and it is in service with law enforcement agencies throughout the country and deployed widely by the U.S. special operations community.

— P.G.K.

also that of the M16, and located on the left side of the trigger housing, cannot be manipulated unless the weapon is cocked. The trigger housing itself, a steel casting with a large integral trigger guard, features an exceptionally wide and unserrated trigger. Trigger-pull weight on SOF's test specimen is an exceptionally crisp 5.0 pounds.

The Barrett bipod, mounted to the front end of the receiver, has been

derived from that of the M60 GPMG. In fact, early Model 82 Barrett rifles were equipped with M60 bipods. Its adjustable legs permit the command height (the distance from the ground to the center line of the barrel's axis) to be varied from 8.5 to 12 inches. The bipod can be rotated approximately 30 degrees in either direction. It can be folded either rearward under the receiver or forward under the barrel.

The bipod is held in place by an aluminum pin (which also serves as the bipod's axis pin) with a spring-loaded detent ball at one end and a pull ring at the other.

Three other similar pins hold the rifle's main groups together. Disassembly is relatively simple. Rest the rifle on its bipod and butt. Draw the bolt to the rear and make sure the chamber is empty. Remove the two rear

.50-Caliber Optics

Our .50 caliber Barrett M99 "Big Shot" rifle was equipped with the Barrett Model 32 10X42mm Mil-dot Scope. Loaded with innovative features, this piece of high-quality glass was designed specifically for the .50-caliber cartridge.

Tube diameter is 32mm. A 32mm tube has more than 30% the cross-sectional area inside the tube than most 1-inch tubes. Once this additional area is available, the erector tube inside the scope body (which carries all lenses except the ocular and objective lenses) and its lenses can be increased in size to transmit more light and thus yield greater resolution and a brighter image. Furthermore, this heavy 32mm housing is more shock-resistant than any 1-inch tube.

The Barrett Model 32 scope is equipped with an illuminated reticle. The color red was chosen as it has the least effect on the operator's night vision capability. A knob directly in front of the ocular provides adjustment of the light intensity, with settings from '1' (minimum) to '11' (maximum). The lowest power setting that will sufficiently illuminate the reticle pattern should be used. To turn off the illuminator rotate the knob to the red '0' position.

There is a range focus knob on the left side of the scope than can be used to fine-tune the scope's focus at various ranges. There is also a unique level indicator ball at the top of the reticle pattern that's used to keep the rifle and scope perfectly vertical and prevent the reticle pattern from canting to the right or left.

This scope is equipped with a mil-dot reticle pattern. Mil-dots were developed by the USMC in the late 1970s to assist Marine Corps snipers in estimating distances. It is now the standard reticle pattern with all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. The term "mil-dot" comes from "mil" — a unit of angular measurement used in artillery and machine gunnery and equal to 1/6400 of a complete revolution — and the fact that the dots are spaced in 1-mil increments on the crosshairs. It should be made clear that the dots themselves are not measured in mil increments, but rather in increments of MOA. In this particular instance, the dots are actually a 1/4 mil in diameter (slightly longer than 3/4 MOA). In any event, the distance between the dots is 3/4 mil and the center-to-center distance between them is exactly 1 mil (3.438 MOA) as is the distance from the top (or bottom) of one dot to the top (or bottom) of the dot above or below (or to the right or left).



The Barrett Model 32 10X42mm Mil-dot Scope is loaded with innovative features and was designed specifically for the .50-caliber cartridge.

The thin inner lines of the reticle pattern measure 0.1 MOA in thickness. There are also four thick posts at the edges of the field of view. They are 1.0 MOA thick. It is important to note that this scope's mil-dot reticle was calibrated to be used at 10X magnification only.

The formula for using the mil-dot system is:

$$\text{(Height or width of target (in yards) X 1,000) / Height or width of target (in mils) = Distance (in yards)}$$

This scope's elevation adjustment knob has been designed to serve as a BDC (Bullet Drop Compensator) for .50-caliber ammunition. It permits fairly rapid changes in elevation adjustment for ranges from 100 to 2,000 meters. There are eight adjustable rings on the knob marked with reference ranges. As the knob is capable of seven complete rotations, a color-coded TRI (Turn Reference Indicator) keeps track of the rotations to assure that the operator dials in the correct range. The rings have been factory preset for .50-caliber ammunition, but can be operator-adjusted and fine-tuned for applications with custom ammunition such as the match-grade ammo from Arizona Ammunition. Each click of rotation of the windage knob, located on the right side of the tube, will move the point of impact 1/2 MOA to either the right or left.

With a suggested retail price of \$1,150, including the rings, this is an excellent scope for work with the .50-caliber cartridge. I would, however, like to see a model with higher power than 10X. When shooting at ranges out to 2,000 meters we need all the magnification we can get, at least 16X and even better up to 30X.

— P.G.K.

retaining pins and the pin in front of the trigger housing. Remove the entire trigger assembly by pulling it downward and out of the receiver well. Pull the buttplate group to the rear and away from the receiver. Grasp the bolt handle and rotate it upward until the bolt group can be withdrawn from the cartridge feed and ejection port. Pull the bipod's retention pin forward to remove the bipod from the receiver.

The bolt group can be easily disassembled for cleaning and lubrication. Insert one of the rifle's retention pins into the hole in cocking piece's shroud. Unscrew the cocking piece and spring-loaded firing pin assembly by turning them counterclockwise and out of the bolt body. Never remove the retention pin from the cocking piece shroud while the cocking piece and firing pin are out of the bolt. The firing pin spring is under heavy load and serious injury might occur if the pin is removed before these components are reassembled in the bolt body. To reassemble, screw the cocking piece shroud assemble back into the bolt until it stops against the bolt's rear face. Remove the pin used for disassembly and rotate the cocking piece shroud in a counterclockwise direction until you hear a click, which should be no more than a 1/8 turn, maximum. At this point the three buttress-threaded locking lugs on the bolt body will be aligned with the three matching lugs on the cocking piece shroud.

Our test and evaluation of the Barrett M99 "Big Shot" resulted in some outstanding accuracy. One member of the three-man SOF test staff fired several .75 MOA groups with this rifle at 200 yards (when the bullet is just starting to stabilize) using match-grade ammo from Arizona Ammunition loaded with the Hornady 750-grain A-MAX boat-tail bullet. It doesn't get any better than this.

More than manageable, the recoil repulse bothered no one on the test staff when fired either from a shooting bench (which will usually generate the stiffest thump) or from the prone position on the ground. Both the Barrett muzzle brake and Sorbothane buttplate proved to be an effective combination in taming the intimidating the .50-caliber round.

Barrett's M99 "Big Shot" is the most pleasant .50-caliber rifle I have ever fired. Incredibly accurate and reasonably priced, it's the best buy of all the big boomers. Complete with the bipod, the suggested retail price is \$3,000. ❧

BARRETT M99

SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** .50 BMG (12.7x99mm).
- Operation:** Bolt-action; equipped with three modified buttress-thread-style locking lugs. Cocks on opening. Not a shell holder type. M16-style safety lever cannot be manipulated unless the weapon is cocked.
- Weight, empty:** 25 pounds (11.4 kg).
- Length, overall:** 54.5 inches.
- Barrel:** Eight-groove bore with right-hand twist of one turn in 15 inches. Equipped with a highly efficient muzzle brake.
- Barrel length:** 33 inches (840 mm).
Feed mechanism: Single-shot.
- Optical sight:** Barrett Model 32 10X42mm Mil-dot scope with 32mm tube, illuminated reticle with adjustable intensity, range focus knob, unique level indicator ball, elevation adjustment knob has been designed to serve as a BDC (Bullet Drop Compensator) for .50-caliber ammunition.
- Furniture:** Buttplate made from a high energy absorbing elastomer called "Sorbothane."
- Finish:** Black hard-coat anodized.
- Price:** M99 rifle with bipod: \$3,000; M32 scope and rings: \$1,150.
- Manufacturer:** Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1077, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1077; phone: 615-896-2938; fax: 615-896-7313; website www.barrettrifles.com; e-mail: mail@barrettrifles.com.
- Ammunition:** Arizona Ammunition, Inc., Dept. SOF, 21421 North 14th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone: 623-516-9004; fax: 623-516-9012; website: www.azammo.com or www.arizonaammunition.com.
Hornady Manufacturing Company (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68803; phone: 308-382-1390; fax: 308-382-5761; website: www.hornady.com).
- T&E summary:** State-of-the-art .50 caliber turn-bolt; relatively lightweight; recoil impulse substantially moderated by truly effective muzzle brake; amazing ¼ MOA accuracy with match-grade ammunition; reasonably priced.



Barrett M99 .50-caliber rifle, fieldstripped.



COMBAT À LA CARTE

Ukrainian Military
Carries Military
Tourism to Its
Logical Extreme

BY FRANK HOPKINS

Uncle Samovich Wants You.

The smooth-looking *Fraulein* in the tight Levis slams a magazine into her AK and dumps it full-auto into the target. At the end of this leonine exercise she peers downrange for a moment, then hands back the weapon with a nervous giggle. A spectacled, diminutive Taiwanese businessman has the steering on his T-72 tank in a death grip, intent on the trail ahead and oblivious to the roar of the 1,200 HP diesel engine as he maneuvers at high speed toward the Fulda Gap. Reaching a preselected firing point, he leaps from the driver's seat to the gunner's position, watches his assistant load, and sends a round screaming down-range.

Greenpeace on steroids? No, the latest opportunities for tourists who *have*, to go play with the latest high-tech toys of those who *have not*, in this case Cowboy Action Shooting with the latest in high-tech weaponry at the

810 square miles of Desna military base 43 miles north of Kiev. Some 14 other active-duty bases and training areas in the Ukraine are also now open for tourists on a pay-for-play basis.

Military Tourism in other forms is not new. Throughout military history, hardcore adventurers or dedicated zealots have grabbed a weapon and volunteered to go fight for their cause of choice, from the Crusades, to various brigades in the Spanish Civil War, to the innumerable wars in Africa and recent events in the Balkans. They

either did it for the cause, or for the adrenaline. Today, you can pay your money and take your choice of adrenaline playing Army, or just playing with Army toys. What you play and what you pay depends on your level of financing, curiosity or need for big toys with big noise. You do not need a cause or dedication, only curiosity and cash, and you can go home any time.

The Chinese PLA invented this genre of military tourism a few years back, as a guise to separate Japanese tourists who had a yen for shooting — pun intended — but were unable to at home because of prohibitive Japanese gun laws. For a fee, the PLA offered the chance to fire various small arms in the security of a PLA base, if you happened to be in China on a tour.

The Ukrainians, however, have upped the ante considerably with travelers' packages that include tours not only of the local tank range or fighter base, but very nice accommodations, side tours of myriad historical sites, or efforts to have the tourist live in the

woods and really get the feel of what it is like to be a Ukrainian soldier — or a jet jockey as you tumble through the air in a MiG-29.

Good Morning, Private Enterprise

Pay for it is the operative term here. Like all tourist enterprises, the Ukrainian military efforts are aimed at providing a thrill and charging for it: Not capitalism run amok, just a pragmatic way for a cash-strapped country to garner funds to support its 400,000-man military machine — and not incidentally to provide a venue to showcase its strongly capable but only moderately successful modern arms export industry.

Keeping a standing army is an expensive proposition, as the Red Chinese found out. In the old days, before the rest of the world was watching whatever one does, to keep a standing army was usually facilitated by pillage of the locals — considered tacky at best by today's standards. What the Chinese government did was

(left) To the sage who claimed that men never grow up, their toys just get bigger — we ask, "Well, whaddaya think of this for a toy?" Drive a T-54/55 and even fire a round for a few hundred bucks. (below) Alaris Travel Agency, in cooperation with the Ukraine Ministry of Defense, will let you and other well-heeled tourists join the Walter Mitty Militia for a day — longer if you can afford it — while they graciously share their playthings from tanks to planes to small arms.



courtesy Alaris



give the People's Liberation Army free rein to go into business where they could, to raise money to support themselves. Being in a monopolistic position as far as controlling the infrastructure is concerned, the PLA now owns the bulk of the utilities, transportation, communications and shipping industries in Mainland China —

plus the lion's share of choice manufacturing and other business opportunities. But they only nibbled around the edges of the potential plum of milking Walter Mitty: The Ukrainians, a warm people who have always been excellent hosts — even, heh, heh, to the invading Germans — are developing this theme to its logical extreme.

After a physical and psychological check-up, you can hot-rod around in an Mi-8 Hip. If you demand a higher pucker factor, they'll even kill both engines and make a dead-stick landing. (right) Ukrainian officer at Desna coaches tourist in the fine art of clearing a traffic jam without breaking a nail.



photos courtesy Narm Taylor

(above) Come fly with me — for a price. Various flight packages are available in this MiG-29, from a peaceful cruise around the aerodrome to heart-stopping aerobatics. (inset) Just when we thought the jet-set was passé, the Ukrainians bring it to a whole new level with buy-some-fly in an air-superiority Su-27.

Traveling on the Ukrainian Plan is Military Lite. Most of the excitement, half the adrenaline and none of the danger of firing a T-72 when an Abrams might return a kinetic round up your nose, or screaming through the air in a MiG-29 when you know no one lurks in the bushes with a Stinger. And if your tastes are eclectic enough to transcend pure noise and cordite, tours are also offered for hiking, mountain tourism, bike tours and "voyages" that extend to the surrounding environs and military resorts, where there is a wealth of well-preserved history, unrummaged by Westerners for several generations. This diversity is also an excellent marketing ploy, considering the proclivity of some spouses and significant others to want to go along. As in, "Hey, Babe, we'll have a wonderful time. Just listen for my sonic boom when you're touring that castle"

The Garden Of A Thousand Delights

With the typical European flair for offering an *à la carte* menu that tempts at every turn, when you pay your money and takes your choice with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense Tourism and Excursions Department, the options are wide open. Although at the end of the Cold War, Ukraine was the world's third largest nuclear power, we regret that pursuant to a 1994 agreement between the Ukraine, Russia

AP/Wide World



and the USA, by June of 1996 the Ukraine had become a nuclear-free state. No doubt their catastrophic experience with the Russian nuclear reactor at Chernobyl predisposed the Ukrainians to shed everything that glows in the dark, but at any rate don't count on firing a nuke from Desna.

But just about anything else is for rent, from assault rifles to heavy artillery. From sniper rifles to supersonic jets. From grenade launchers to armored personnel carriers. From machine guns to main battle tanks. From regularly scheduled package tours in the scenic resorts of Kichkine, Primorsk or Sevastopol, to bunking in the field with the grunts or back-seating in a state-of-the-art air-superiority fighter, the choice is yours.

Where did this idea come from? One might suspect that some hard-strapped official was mulling over our admission that the Communist Party, USA would never have survived had it not been for the generous cadre of FBI infiltrators, and decided they could at least break even on this whole enterprise if no more than all interested Western

HOOPS, HASSLES AND HAZARDS

Getting Around In Eastern Europe

Today, the ease, cost and safety of travel among the states of the former Warsaw Pact — and the demeanor of the locals — is directly proportional to how long that particular state was under the heels of the communists.

Travel through the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and so forth is now cheap, efficient, reasonably safe and quite enjoyable. Because these countries had an institutional memory to fall back on when the people finally got the communists circling the drain for the final flush, they already knew what to do to rejoin the 20th Century, and immediately set about — within constraints of socialist-damaged economies — getting it together. In a few scant years they were right on track for tourism with good infrastructure and a traditional hospitality. In any country blessed with a less than robust economy — and a floating population whose tradition is petty crime — the pick-pockets, pilferers and now credit-card scammers are an irritation, but still less than in New York City and not a problem for any aware tourist.

The countries of the former Soviet Union, however, are another story. By and large the institutionalized corruption of communism has been replaced by the regular system, where individual politicians are on the take and petty officials often have their hand out. Add to that the strongly lingering psychosis of having control freaks in charge for the better part of a century, and these countries still are saddled with petty bureaucrats whose only function is to make life miserable and enforce meaningless regulations with a fervor that justifies their paltry paycheck.

Regretfully, the Ukraine is not an exception, and travel there is literally a rocky road not traveled at night, and the paperwork is the usual socialist series of hoops and "Mother-may-I" drills. But this writer doesn't fault them for this, as it is all they know. And since *you* are the tourist it behooves you to go by *their* rules. You can anticipate minimal hassle if you do.

Hoops

We should outline some of the hoops — fortunately none of them flaming — you should anticipate jumping for travel to or in the Ukraine. If you had occasion to travel around the Warsaw Pact in the old days, none of these will be a surprise.

Travel *within* Ukraine is unrestricted, but to get in you will need a passport and visa. If you live in a country with a Ukrainian embassy or consulate, you must get your visa before you leave (which you can readily do by mail); if you are from a country without such Ukrainian offices, you can get a visa at the airport or at border crossings. To qualify for a visa, you will need a letter of invitation from a person, company or organization in the Ukraine. For more details on the visa application process, check out the Ukrainian web site at <http://www.ukremb.com/conf1.htm>. Only a minor hassle, but something you *must* take care of before you go.

All *auslanders* visiting the Ukraine, except those staying less than three days and those under 18, are required to register their passports with local law-enforcement authorities:

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intelligence agencies sent their spies through the resort to glean what they could. But in reality, the market came to them, and like all good capitalists, they seized the moment in the best Horatio Alger fashion.

This unusual departure in military financing was foreshadowed back in 1999, when military health centers were considered for foreign tourists. Colonel Oleksandr Drofa, chief of the Tourism and Excursions Department, told the Ukrainian newspaper *The Day* that at the "Ukraine-99" international tourist fair held in Kiev, a number of tour agents said they had customers who were interested in "bare-knuckle" tourism. They wanted to spend holidays at the Ukrainian military health centers, and even play Rambo: parachute jumps, joyriding the Black Sea in official patrol boats, touring underground submarine repair facilities, diving in Ukrainian naval submersibles and so on. Drofa noted to *The Day* that "it is no problem offering such experiences: The problem is to live and develop in the bare-knuckles conditions of our state. For the military as well as civilians are ... being stifled by taxes ... military bases are registered as state-run enterprises and have to pay taxes."

So, late in 1999, "energetic" people, including foreigners, were offered holidays that included hiking, mountaineering, bike racing, watersports and competitions and rafting. Although some tourists wanted to participate



AP/Wide World

Bracing for the worst, tourist gets ready to fire AK-74 with cup-type grenade discharger, while Ukrainian officer patiently looks on. This has to be better duty than herding recruits.

The Locals Are Friendly

In many parts of Central and Eastern Europe the transport net is still a little threadbare, but any inconveniences of travel are more than compensated by the warm reception that folks extend to well-behaved tourists.

Subtle differences in custom can be important, however. The Yankee ability to laugh at ourselves and our *faux pas*, never at the perceived eccentricities of our hosts, is a helpful antidote to unintended offense, but it's good to know beforehand the few things most Westerners would never think of, that can be offensive to a Ukrainian.

For instance, never shake hands across the threshold of a house: It is considered very bad luck. Shake hands inside or outside, and remember to take off your right glove. It is the custom throughout this region of Europe to remove your shoes when entering a home: Often, slippers are provided for guests.

When visiting a home, it is customary to bring a small gift such as a jug, some pastries, or flowers. Make sure there is an even number of flowers (odd-numbered bouquets are bad luck). If there are kids in the house, it's always appropriate to bring a small gift for them, as well. When meeting someone at the airport, take them a bouquet. Hey, it's what they do.

Casual dress is usually OK for dinner at someone's home — but be prepared to offer a toast. Make sure it is something that will translate, not "Here's mud in your eye" or any references to fleas and camels.

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directly in military maneuvers, at the onset they only were allowed to tag along as ad hoc cooks and medics. With four military recreation centers, each one was able to admit an average of 8,000 vacationers a year, at costs from \$10 to \$20 a day. Although not a lucrative proposition for the Department of Defense, it worked, and within a year the schedule of events — and the ante — was upped considerably.

Shell Shock And Sticker Shock

In a news conference last October to announce the new programs, Hryhory Zhorov, head of the Alaris travel agency which organized the new program in concert with Ukrainian arms maker Ukrspetsexport, observed to

POINTS OF CONTACT

There is no such thing as a hassle-free trip. You can, however, get the hassles out of the way before you leave, and here are the places to go:

A trip to the Ukraine starts with a visa. This rather simple drill, plus lots more helpful information on travel there, is available on the Ukrainian Embassy web site: <http://www.ukremb.com/conf1.htm>.

The best deals and best service on travel often are available from agents who specialize in a particular area. For travel to the Ukraine we recommend Ms. Carolyn Peters, Journeys Travel, 49 N. Gore Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119; phone: 800-962-5147.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry, Tourism and Excursions Department, can provide information on hiking, mountaineering, biking and boat trips at the Defense Ministry's resorts. Good for economical side trips, or as trip options for a significant other while you go play army. Phone from the U.S.A.: 011-7-380-44-2540-044; fax: 011-7-380-44-2948-028. Mail address: 252021 ap.306 30/1 Grushevsky Street, Kiev, UKRAINE.

The travel company authorized to front for the Ukrainian Defense Ministry in their tanks-guns-planes military tours is ALARIS Travel Company, 1117, 23 M Raskovoy St., Kiev 02002, UKRAINE; phone from the USA: 011-7-380-44-517-83-45; fax: 011-7-380-44-517-51-88; e-mail: tour@info.kiev.ua. Alaris is a very professional outfit, but sometimes comms (phone or e-mail) are a little difficult over a rickety phone net. They are eight hours ahead of New York time.

reporters that, "today's tourists are hard to surprise with anything, so we decided to offer something really spicy."

And the best spices, of course, are expensive. Whereas before one could cook wild mushrooms and berries for the troops in the field for a paltry \$10 to \$20 a day, to play in the big leagues will cost the well-heeled would-be warrior \$2,000 cover charge just to get in the gate. Half-hour to 40-minute flights in the back seat of a MiG-29UB or a SU-27UB will set you back from \$5,235 to \$11,125, depending on which maneuvers you want performed, duration of flight and other considerations. This includes your pilot/instructor, fuel, maintenance, ground time and so on. The flight suit rental is an additional \$100, and if you want to perform a Nesterov's loop you should bring your own Depends. Fairly pricey, but bear in mind what it costs to maintain and feed such beasts — and the fact the next time some schmuck brags he broke the sound barrier in the Concord, you can say, "Yeah, well, that's about what it was like when I broke the sound barrier in an SU-27." Whether or not you add that you happened to be "over there" to instruct the Bolshoi is up to you.

If you don't have your heart set on breaking the sound barrier, flights in the L-39 trainer start at only \$1,410 for a half-hour, and a heart-pounding aerobatics package is \$1,725. If egg beaters are your thing, one of several flights offered in an Mi-8 is sure to please you. You can get 60 minutes of varied routine for \$2,610 or 30 minutes for \$1,830.

Continued on page 44

Don't do this, and you can expect problems getting back out, or extending visas, etc. This registration requirement is automatically met when foreigners stay in hotels; private visitors must have their host or landlord register their U.S. passport at the local "Section of Visas and Registration" at the Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (VVIR). A small fee is charged, of course. Times have changed, and this requirement is not so that some dude in a trench coat can follow you around — it's just that this is what they're used to doing. In other words, act decently and you will be a welcome guest. If there is a knock on your hotel room door it will only be the chambermaid. Note that your Ukrainian visa is *not* good in Russia.

Ukrainian authorities currently require that all foreigners have proof of emergency medical insurance. A state insurance company offers emergency medical insurance policies, which can be purchased at the airport or port of entry. Be sure to check your own insurance to see if it is good overseas, and if it is, carry a proof of insurance with you. *Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad* is a good document to get (from the U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs, or autofax 202-647-3000).

Local customs regs require that you declare all cash and jewelry you take in, regardless of value — undeclared items are subject to confiscation. You can take up to \$1,000 U.S. without special permission.

Bear in mind that if you break Ukrainian law, even unknowingly, you can get expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Possession, use or trafficking in drugs can get you hard time and heavy fines.

It's always a good idea to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy (#6 Pimonenko St., in Kiev, phone: 380-44-246-8048), and you can get local updates on travel and security considerations at the same time — and they can give you a short list of English-speaking doctors and pharmacies.

Hassles And Hazards

About the only non-governmental hassle is local travel and finding an ATM or a place to cash a traveler's check in a small town — unless you are Black or Asian: The Embassy in Kiev has received reports of attacks on Americans of Black or Asian lineage by skinhead groups (ever notice it's always a "skinhead group?" Cowards never attack alone). And in outlying areas, the local cops ("militia") have been known to hassle Blacks and Asians with frequent stops and searches. Always carry a copy of your passport — under Ukrainian law you can be detained for three hours while they check your papers.

Just like in New York City, all tourists are subject to pickpockets, muggers and assorted other vermin on the mass transit systems. Take the same precautions you would at home, and don't travel alone at night on the mass transit systems. Overall the safety of public transportation rates a "fair" as does the condition of urban roads — but rural road conditions and the availability of roadside assistance is poor. Night carjackings of western-made or foreign-registered cars is on the increase — all the usual suspects when there is rampant inflation, unemployment a breakdown of the social fabric.

But hey, if things were all rosy, the Ukrainian military wouldn't misapply themselves for the benefit of thrill-seeking tourists, would they?

— F.H.

PASS IN REVIEW

Fireforce

One Man's War in the Rhodesian Light Infantry, by Chris Cocks (second edition) Published by Covos-Day Books, Box 6996, Weltvreden Park, Roodepoort 1715, South Africa 1997; distributed in the United States by BHB International, 108 East North First Street, Suite G, Seneca, South Carolina 29678; phone: 864-885-9444.
Reviewed by Frank Hopkins



As that anguished nation now implodes from the incredible ineptness and corruption of the “victors” of the war of “liberation,” the rectitude of the internationally unpopular Ian Smith regime and its cause is now becoming patently clear, even to those who reviled it and marshalled international support against it back in the '70s.

That the Rhodesian government was able to survive militarily as long as it did in the face of international opposition and foreign military attack is a tribute to some of the finest soldiers ever to take a rifle into battle. The ultimate defeat does in no way detract from the Rhodesian military's against-all-odds successes, nor the lessons that can be learned from some of the most effective light infantry in history. One of the best books ever written from foxhole level about that war is Chris Cocks' *Fireforce*, which has been re-released in its second edition. It is a gritty, straight-from-the-shoulder account

of Cocks' service in 3 Commando, The Rhodesian Light Infantry, during the protracted bush war.

Fireforce was a method of combat developed by the Rhodesians and perfected by the RLI, which had troops air-inserted or air-dropped into an area as soon as any guerrilla presence was reported, or sighting made. The beleaguered nation was always short of ground forces, and the combat tempo was incredible: operating like a cammoued 911 force, it was not unusual for the same force to parachute into three separate contacts a day.

The author takes the reader through the strenuous training and then through the years of close-combat in Rhodesia and in various neighboring states that harbored ZANLA and ZIPLA communist guerrillas, as they were fought at their source, one combat jump, one forced march, one firefight at a time.

This volume is a face-to-face account of a brutal war at point-blank range. Without a doubt one of the best-reading volumes on the war in Rhodesia.

Jihad!

The Secret War in Afghanistan, by Tom Carew.
Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh and London. 2000.
Reviewed by Jake Border

Sooner or later it had to come. First there were the “behind Soviet lines” books by western journalists; then, with *glasnost*, accounts from Soviet journalists and soldiers. Finally, 20 years down the track, comes the first account by a western soldier involved on the covert side of the Cold War's last great battle — the Afghan jihad.

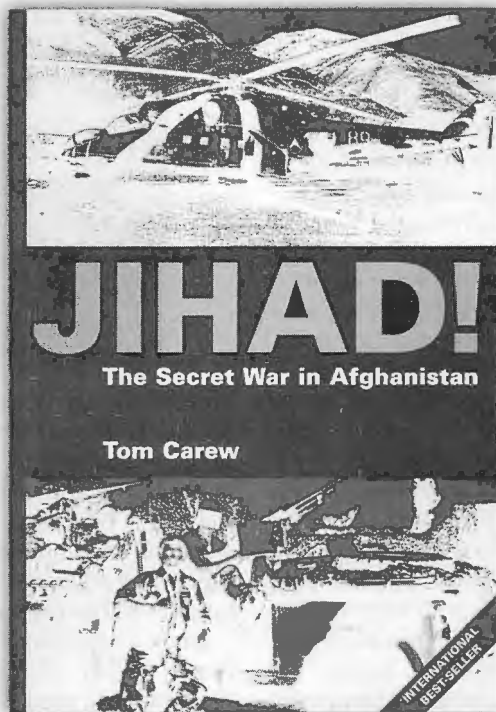
Tom Carew served first in the British Parachute Regiment and later, between 1973-79, in the elite Special Air Service Regiment seeing action in Northern Ireland and Oman. In May 1980, five months after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he was contracted on a strictly deniable basis by the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and the United States' Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) to run cross-border missions into southern Afghanistan to gain badly needed intel on the fighting capabilities of the *mujahideen* and to bring out captured Soviet military equipment for analysis in the West. Around the same time that SOF reporter Galen Geer was bringing out of Afghanistan 5.54mm ammo belonging to the new Soviet AK-74 assault rifle, Carew exfiltrated in June 1980 with what was probably the West's first AK-74 taken from a Russian soldier he killed.

Between May 1980 and early 1981, Carew made four trips across the border from Pakistan interspersed with debriefs in London and Washington. First, came a brief recon into southern Kandahar province; later, longer forays into

eastern Nangahar, around Jalalabad city, home to the Soviet Army's 66th Motor Rifle Brigade. With the aid of an SIS case-officer providing back-up in Peshawar and Islamabad, Carew traveled with the *Hizb-i-Islami* (Islamic party) of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hizb was later to reveal its true anti-western colors, and increasingly attract the wrath of the western press which went on to slam Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for funneling the bulk of U.S. aid to the Hizb. But as Carew's book shows, and this writer saw in several months in northern Afghanistan in 1981 and 1982, at the beginning of the jihad there were only two well-organized *muj* factions with a nationwide network of commanders: the mainly ethnic Pushtun Hizb in the south and east and its northern Tajik rival the *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society) whose leading commander Ahmadshah Massoud was to emerge as the best known guerrilla strategist of the jihad. The pro-Western parties of Gailani and Mujadidi — the "Gucci guerrillas" much beloved of the Western press — emerged later and were never more than bit players in the war. Interestingly, the first tensions between Hizb and Jamiat, that was to explode into full-on clashes by 1981 and all-out civil war in 1992 when the communist regime finally fell, were already apparent to Carew in 1980. He recounts his Hizbis passing a Jamiat group on a trail and being warned by his Hizb guide of the "bad" *Jamiat*is.

Told in the down-to-earth, sardonic language of a British soldier, "Jihad" will not be winning any prizes for literature. But the story of his experiences with the mujahideen — and Soviets — and his ongoing dealings with intel bureaucrats with long wish-lists and zero understanding of ground conditions makes for entertaining, even compelling, reading. Like most Westerners who spent protracted periods in the sticks with the *muj*, Carew comes to appreciate and respect the Afghans, their unswerving religious faith and amazing mental and physical stamina in the face of appalling odds.

But inevitably he also runs hard up against the flip-side: the *muj*'s cheerful ignorance of basic fieldcraft and alarming proclivity for "battlefield democracy" — what he terms the "Chinese parliament" of heated discussion and debate that erupts every time a decision needs to be taken. Coupled with



their early lack of experience and training, the result in encounters with a modern army equipped with helicopter gunships is often disastrous screw-ups and high casualties. Carew's account of being reluctantly led into a large-scale ambush by an ignorant, arrogant *muj* commander who refuses to accept basic advice from a Western "infidel" is all too authentic. In 1981 this reviewer was in a similar situation in northern Kunduz province involving a truck convoy of supremely confident mujahideen meeting a convoy of Soviet APCs head-on on a major highway, with interesting results!

Aside from assessing Afghan capabilities and requirements for a long-term guerrilla war, Carew was also tasked with bringing out Soviet equipment. His best find was almost certainly the AK-74 but he also bags a chunk of armor from a downed Mi-24 Hind and NBC-protection kit issued to Soviet troops at a time

when the Soviet Union was apparently experimenting with chemical warfare in various parts of the country.

The shadow of the Hind dominates much of the book even as that gunship dominated the Afghan skies for much of the war. According to Carew's account Western intel determined on the need to introduce shoulder-held SAMs for the *muj* to counter the threat far earlier than was otherwise thought. In late 1980, Carew served as pointman in "Operation Manta," an ambitious SIS-DIA effort to hijack 10 SAM-7 "Grail" launchers and 30 missiles, part of a consignment bought by Libyan dictator Ghaddafi from Bulgaria (where the state arms manufacturer Kintex produced the system).

The scam involves making the Vienna-based arms-dealer interfacing between the Libyans and Bulgarians an offer he finds difficult to refuse and then padding the Libyan order with its attendant end-user certificate by 10 units. Picked up from Sofia, Bulgaria, by a chartered Icelandic plane which Carew joins a loadmaster, the SAMs are then quietly "hijacked" by Carew to USAF Ramstein in Germany where the the 10 extra launchers and their missiles are offloaded. The stunned Icelandic aircrew is then permitted to fly on to Tripoli with the original Libyan consignment and enough money in their pockets to keep their mouths shut.

As the book makes clear, the SAM-7 was never a great success in Afghanistan. Nor was the far more sophisticated British Blowpipe, according to Carew first introduced into

Afghanistan for a 'test run' in early 1981, long before 1985 when press reports had the system delivered to the muj. He ought to know — he was ordered to cross into Afghanistan from a training camp he was running for muj on the Pakistani side of the border to conduct the test. Under optimum conditions and with plenty of training the Blowpipe is more an effective system than the SAM-7, as after launch it can be guided by its operator onto the target along a radio beam. But optimum conditions have never existed in Afghanistan and Carew's attempt to take on a flight of five Hinds nearly costs him and his companions their lives.

Carew's literary agent was clearly not blind to the need to intersperse the author's adventures with hairy, unwashed Afghans and Soviet gunships with more reader-friendly characters. There are brief appearances in Sofia and Peshawar by a friendly Bulgarian hooker and a British teacher. But a more recurring fixture is Kathy, a leggy, blonde SIS secretary at the British High Commission in Islamabad who debriefs our hero — and otherwise entertains him during well-earned R&R in Pakistan. Well, who's to say it never happened ...?

In the end it's not the Soviets who finally get the better of Carew; or the Afghans or even the ever-vigilant Pakistani military intelligence. Typically it's his own health worn down by the rigors of terrain, movement and diet. For Westerners operating with the muj in Afghanistan this was par for the course: Once you'd got your feet sorted out, your worst liability was always your own stomach. Carew is finally medicated home with a colorful combination of hepatitis, jaundice and malaria.

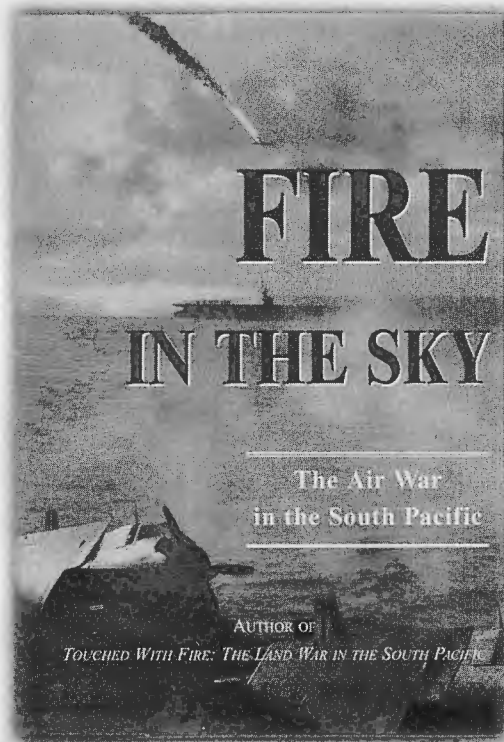
In a thoroughly entertaining read, there aren't many points worth taking Carew to task over. One perhaps is the stress he lays on seeing a convoy of opium being brought out of Nangahar by the Hizb with a nudge and wink from the Pakistani ISI. The CIA, he asserts, later attempt to suppress the information. Narcotics production inside Afghanistan certainly has expanded by the late 80s and early 90s. Indeed, the Taliban regime in Kabul has largely financed itself through the drug trade. But to suggest as Carew does that in 1980 the muj were funding their war effort through opium is a transparent attempt to give his memoirs a current relevance they don't really have — or need, for that matter.

Carew also recounts finding himself in close proximity to a female nurse in a muj base in Nangarhar. Good going, Tom. In over 10 years of covering the Afghan war and visiting hundreds of bases and villages this correspondent never got to see muj nurses once. Nor did any other Westerners I know. In the Afghan countryside you counted yourself lucky to see women at all, let alone young, unveiled nurses. But then I never got to meet sexy secretaries at the pool of the Intercon in Peshawar, either. So the only thing that proves is what we all knew already: the benefits of SAS training are not merely military.

Fire In the Sky

The Air War in the South Pacific, by Eric M. Bergerud.
Published by Westview Press, Dept. SOF, 5500 Central Ave.,
Boulder, CO 80301-2877; phone: 303-444-3541.
Reviewed by Frank Hopkins

The difference between a historical writer and a historian is the ability to take a subject sweeping in scope and tirelessly sift through acre-feet of documents, interview scores of actual participants in the event, and, one grain of sand at a



time, mold this mountain of disjointed and sometimes anecdotal data into a coherent lesson that hopefully will be of use to future generations disinterested in repeating the mistakes of the last. A truly good historian, therefore, not only delineates what happened, but gives the reader the tools to understand the how and the why. And the best of historians also do this with a style and clarity that captures the reader, as history not learned is even less useful than history forgotten.

Such a historian is Eric Bergerud, and such a work is his *Fire in the Sky*. The South Pacific air war of WWII was geographically so expansive, and involved so many participants over such a long period of time with concurrent action on several disparate fronts, that to cover these events in a coherent manner requires a true master of the craft. Bergerud has accomplished this with aplomb, and in an encyclopedic yet concise volume of some 600 pages.

The early war in the Pacific was largely an air war, as such was the nature of air assets that they could be thrown into the fray quickly — and it was evident early on that who controlled the skies might well control the theater. Forces from Imperial Japan, the United States, Australia and New Zealand fought from largely primordial facilities or from aircraft carriers, both of which represented hostile environs. Each side fielded the best assets it could, and the skies were first dominated by the Japanese Zero, then by the large fleets of Allied bombers that took the war to the enemy and eventually to his homeland, and finally, by second-generation Allied fighters that swept the enemy from the sky. This was a three-dimensional war, and in a fast-paced and easy read the author explores not only the battlefields, but the technology, tactics and leadership that were the deciding factors.

It is a history that has been told many times in many fragmented or myopic volumes, but to date no single volume has done such a credible job of presenting an intelligible whole.

Bergerud is professor of military and American history at Lincoln University in San Francisco. His ability to weave data, war stories, and insightful analysis is as good as it gets, and *Fire in the Sky* is a must-read book for students of military or Pacific history. ✕

No news here from a tactical standpoint. Law enforcement officers and military types have been doing it this way forever. Get them, cuff or secure them and separate them from each other. It was good advice then and it still is today.

Don't ever march home the same way. Take a different route so you won't be ambushed.

Although this sounds military, and it is, it is also a good everyday concept applied by actually a lot of people I know. Have a couple of different routes home to and from work. Don't set up regulated schedules for making bank deposits from your business. Vary your walks around the block. This screws up the anal folks because everything has to be the same all the time. In all candor, doing everything the same way all the time can get you killed. Even a habit acquired as a kid can cause you a problem: When you were a kid walking down the street and you saw an empty soda can lying on the ground in front of you, what did you do? So here I am 15 years later (and full of programming), and I see a soda can laying alongside a dusty road in Vietnam while on a patrol. If I do what I am programmed to do, my new nickname is stumpy. Go figure.

No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout 20 yards ahead, 20 yards on each flank and 20 yards to the rear, so the main body can't be surprised and wiped out.

The old call of "flankers out" is basically a military application providing security to a main body force movement. Anybody who has walked point or flanks can tell you it is not all its cracked up to be, but it is necessary to effective movement. Law enforcement officers could use a scout concept for SWAT teams to provide information about ground they are about to cover. A sniper/observer team can also provide additional information, as well as covering fire in a more contemporary environment or application. In a civilian application it is a little harder to apply this concept due to a lack of a great number of personnel. Civilian application could best be applied by awareness that a potential attack could come from any direction. Simply be alert to your surroundings.

Every night you'll be told where to meet if surrounded by a superior force.

Current terminology refers to this as a rally point. If separated or split up from your partners, this rally point would be a location agreed to prior to contact with hostile groups. We simply agree to meet somewhere if we lose each other in the bush, at the mall, or the one we remember as kids, if there is a fire in the house we meet at the neighbor's house. Based on application, prior agreement to a password or code word is helpful if we could potentially meet each other in the dark. At night some strange things can happen. Here in Texas we just had an adult male shoot and kill a 12-year-old boy at 1830 hours. In his statement he and others in his group were hunting and as they approached the area where they were to meet up, the adult male shot at what he thought was a wild hog. What was firearms safety rule number four? Be sure of your target.

Don't sit down and eat without posting sentries.

This one's pretty easy to figure out. Somebody's got to be watching what's going on around us. In today's environment when you go out to eat in the public domain, someone in your party needs to be in a position to watch the front doors and cash register. I don't plan on fighting for the restaurant's money, but I don't want to get killed over it either. Even though it wasn't about the money, the Luby's restaurant incident in Killeen, Texas, is a fairly valid example. When you sit down to eat, look around before you order. If something goes wrong while you are there, where are the exits? What are the routes of escape out of there?

Don't sleep beyond dawn. Dawn's when the French and Indians attack.

Of all our friend's orders, this one is the most difficult to transition to modern times without offending our current allies, the French and Native Americans; not politically correct, you know. But in the times these were written it simply meant what it said. Don't get caught off guard sleeping late.

Don't cross a river by a regular ford.

The concept here overlaps some of the earlier orders mentioned. In training, repetition is the mother of skill, in movement or tactics repetition may get us a whack in the proverbial nose. If I keep throwing a right hook, sooner or later they'll catch on to it, block it and counter. Remember being lazy and certain habits can get you hurt. I wonder how many guys were killed or injured in wars opening gates, doors, kicking cans and picking up sou-

venirs? Be careful out there.

If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your own tracks, and ambush the folks who aim to ambush you.

Although there isn't much trailing and ambushing going on these days, there actually is in a fashion. Simply be alert and aware of your surroundings, and the act of having functional defensive firearms available to you makes you less of a potential target or victim. Approximately 30 states have some form of concealed-carry. Crime rates are lower in these states ... less tracking and ambushing going on ... especially when the bad guys don't know if whom they are tracking and trailing is armed!

Don't stand up when the enemy's coming against you — kneel down, lie down, hide behind a tree.

This one's pretty easy. There aren't but a few knotheads left in the world who still recommend you stand on your feet in the open and fight like a real man. Most of that gene pool has been eliminated, or will be soon enough. Use protective cover! Minimize yourself as a target. Any questions?

Let the enemy come till he's almost close enough to touch. Then let him have it and jump out and finish him up with your hatchet.

This last one is primarily addressing weapons systems of an earlier era. With contemporary firearms, distance is generally your friend. Let the flat trajectory of modern rifles and handguns work to your advantage. I, however, recommend you don't underestimate cold steel and old guns. It's pretty amazing to watch a 1,250 fps 520-grain lead .45-70 caliber black powder projectile go broadside clean through a 2,000-pound bison.

The true author of these 19 examples of tactical concepts was a Major Robert Rogers. Rogers and his Rangers fought for the British and their American counterparts against the French and their allies the Indians during the French and Indian Wars.

These orders in card form are still issued to some American combat troops. I have my original yellow card copy as issued to me when I was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps Combined Action Program in the Republic of Vietnam circa 1968.

Even though these concepts and tactical ideas were written over 242 years ago, they still hold many valid applications. Major Robert Rogers wrote these Standing Orders for his forest-bound Rangers in the year 1759 — so much for the "we invented it here" syndrome.

Way to go, Major Bob! ✕



COMBAT SNIPER

Operations At An Hoa, 1967

by John Culbertson
Photos courtesy author

The following is excerpted from John's upcoming book, 13-Cent Killers: The 5th Marine Sniper Platoon in Vietnam, 1966-1968.

13-Cent Killers is John Culbertson's third book about the 5th Marines in Vietnam. His first and second, Operation Tuscaloosa and A Sniper in the Arizona, are presently published by Ivy Books, New York. Both are available in hardback editions from the Military Book Club, where they are best-sellers.

BY 5 November 1966, 5th Marine snipers were running 11 three-man teams mostly standing security for the 11th Marines artillery camp and running night ambushes and some day patrols with the grunts trying to interdict Viet Cong troop movements and stop sapper attacks. Sergeant Casey had proved his worth running teams in and out of the bush gaining confidence and jungle instinct that would later serve his Marines well when they would be asked to provide the "long rifle" support to the infantry during the regimental-sized battles that were coming in 1967.

A new Commanding Officer ordered Sergeant Casey into the duty hut on 13 November and he was given command of

the 5th Marine Regimental Sniper Platoon on a permanent basis. Casey was tasked with training all new recruits and keeping the teams fit for combat and rotating ambush teams and patrols. Tom Casey used his military experience gained at the Citadel as a cadet and led as many ambushes as he could to instill proper techniques of night movement, noise discipline, and above all, the common sense to know when to fire at the enemy and when silence and caution are necessary.

One instant result of Casey's leadership was making the young snipers like Vaughn Nickell and Ron Willoughby realize that their leader knew his business. Further, no one doubted Casey's bravery or his dedication to the sniper's training. Casey had seen Marine officers in Vietnam that would lead their troops on major operations when the opportunities for combat distinction and glory were obvious. However, few if any officers led the daily regular "Win the hearts and minds" patrols into the hamlets, through the rice fields, past workers bent over their mud-laced paddies where the booby traps and the quick-kill ambushes were the daily practice of the Viet Cong. Tom Casey felt that the officer corps was missing their

duty in observing first-hand how effective sniping could protect a patrol and eliminate or harass the enemy sniper and ambush threat that was a constant worry to the NCOs who led the great majority of combat patrols.

Tom Casey's men were akin to the Old West gunfighters who carved notches on the butts of their rifle stocks every time a desperado fell to their blazing gunfire. Casey had started the making of a Marine Corps legend and he knew that the move north to An Hoa would make or break the sniper platoon as an effective combat force to operate with the already combat proven infantry units. On 3 January 1967, Willoughby, Vaughn Nickell, and Jim Flynn, from Utica, Illinois, who alternated with Nickell as Sgt. Casey's spotter when the platoon sergeant went on a combat patrol, boarded a C-130 to DaNang before straightening out their itinerary to An Hoa, an old regional village and home to an Army of South Vietnam (ARVN) company, but relatively unknown and new to the Marines.

An Hoa was approximately 25 miles southwest of Da Nang and occupied the westernmost Marine combat headquarters in I Corps. To the northeast of An Hoa were the Song Thu Bon and Song Vu Gia rivers which were main Viet Cong arteries for infiltration of both men and supplies into the An Hoa Basin. Tom Casey's 5th Marine Snipers would team up with the battle hardened 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines which was pulling out of the Demilitarized Zone at Con Thien to establish a new base in An Hoa in the center of Quang Nam Province.

When the C-130 lowered its flaps and descended into An Hoa, the short landing strip was slicked down with recent rainfall. The Air Force transport skidded to a stop and the snipers deplaned and stared at the jungle-cloaked hillsides of the Que Son Mountains ringing the southern boundaries of the base. The northern vista was open and wove itself into a quilt of ricefields that squeezed the main highway jutting out of the base's perimeter-wire apron and snaked far away toward Da Nang. The day was grey and cold and mists hung in the trees that tilted away toward the rice fields on the edge of the airstrip. A sharp wind blew across the tarmac from the northeast and spread an icy warning of the dangers to be found across the river in the Arizona Territory.

Tom Casey pulled the collar of his dirt streaked utility jacket up snugly around his neck. He looked back into the open hatch and motioned to Ron Willoughby to get the men off the plane and onto the runway for weapon and gear inspection. Rumor had it that the snipers would be surveying (turning in) their old reliable M1D sniper rifles and be armed with the new Remington bolt-action rifles. It would just be Casey's luck if someone forgot their cleaning gear or side-mounted scopes. The Marine Corps was hell on troops who failed to survey the equipment that they had drawn from supply.

Tom Casey laughed in that easy Southern manner that could confuse a new sniper about his legendary toughness and discipline. He thought about the story he had heard in bootcamp about the combat Marine who had failed to return from Guadalcanal or some World War II battle with his M1 rifle. The Platoon sergeant had asked Private "Numbnuts" how he had lost his rifle, and the private said a Japanese artillery shell had hit his position and when he raised his head his rifle was gone. "Just blown up, I guess!" The platoon sergeant told him that he was issued that rifle and it was a part of him. That rifle was his life. The next beach landing that the company makes, the old platoon sergeant continued to bark, "You will attack the Japanese holding on to your pecker. I don't imagine you'll find a way to loose that!"

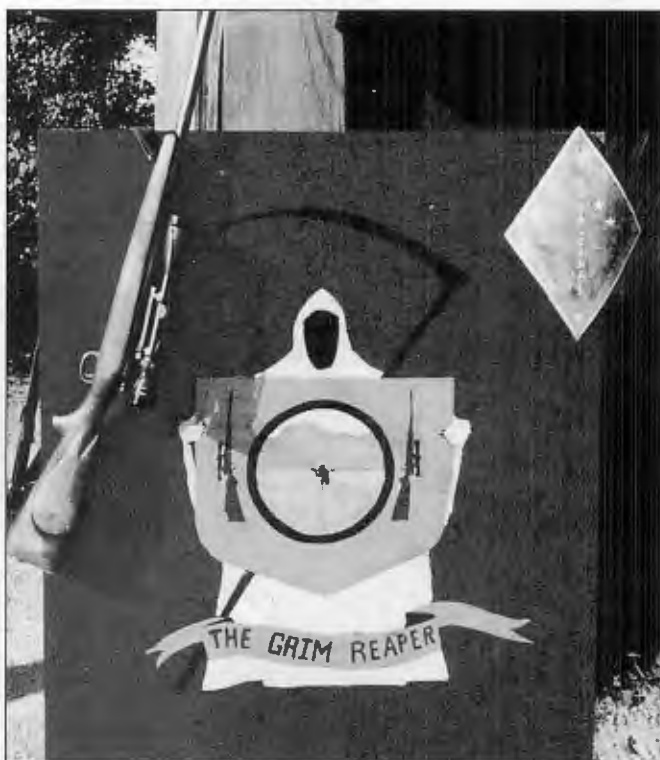


5th Marine snipers at 1st Division Scout Sniper School, Da Nang, 1967.

Laugh While You Can

Sometimes the Marine Corps was hilarious. Tom Casey grinned about all the crazy stuff that happened in combat and his snipers would make a joke out of the situation. Maybe they laughed just to keep from crying. If rumors were anything near accurate, the sniper platoons new adventures with some of the blood and guts commanders of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines wouldn't generate much humor. Casey gazed out into the grey and misty clouds that blanketed the river as the platoon fell into formation for a brief inspection.

Later in the day after being assigned two hootches near the Headquarters Section of the 2/5, Casey lead his men to the battalion mess hall for a welcome meal of fried chicken, and real mashed potatoes with brown gravy. A gunnery sergeant met Casey as the snipers were leaving chow and gave him orders to turn in their rifles at battalion supply.



"The Grim Reaper," logo of the 5th Marines Scout Sniper Platoon 1966-69. The unit had the highest number of kills and was most decorated sniper unit of the Vietnam War.



Tom Casey, Vaughn Nickell, Ron Willoughby, and Jim Flynn plucked their MIDs from their cases for a last farewell to the rifles that had made the Marines invincible from Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Saipan, and Peleliu to the Chosin Reservoir in Korea. This rifle was the old warhorse that was adopted in 1936 and had served America well against all comers for 30 years.

The new Remington 700s would have bolt-actions honed by Marine armorers. The medium-heavy barrels were made by Douglas and were air-gauged for accuracy. The barrels were free-floated in walnut stocks with Monte Carlo cheek pieces. The trigger was a match Canjar set-up that broke crisply at 2 pounds. Atop the receiver rested a new Redfield variable 3x9 power telescopic sight with coated lenses that prevented fogging and internal rangefinding grids. All-in-all the Remington Sniper rifle was the finest weapon the Marine Corps had ever fielded in Vietnam.

No Second Place

Casey wasn't entirely convinced that the rifle would outshoot a 1903 Springfield A-4 Sniper rifle like the Marines had used to pick-off Japs on Okinawa, and along the frozen mountain passes of the Chosin Reservoir. A tuned-up 1903 A-4 Springfield in the hands of a proven combat sniper — not some Marine Corps paper target-puncher — was accurate out

to 800 yards, and maybe a thousand if Gunnery Sergeant Mitchell was the shooter. Casey wondered why all the clamor about target shooters was such a big deal anyway. It was a fact that a combat sniper had to understand much more about terrain, winds, weather characteristics, and the enemy than someone shooting a fixed course with a previously sighted-in weapon. After some of the havoc Casey had seen caused by the Viet Cong snipers, it was evident that knowledge and experience in actual combat situations was much more critical than the type of rifle employed.

The Viet Cong had thus far killed far more Americans with sniper fire than the reverse. This was mainly a result of knowing the terrain and maximizing the element of surprise. The Viet Cong were masters of camouflage and deceptive in constructing ambush sites and killing zones. They were also renowned for their patience and their stealth. Their equipment was decidedly inferior to American weaponry, yet they dominated the ambush opportunities probably 10 to one. Tom Casey had a Southerner's heart and he was a proud and careful man. But above all, Casey and Willoughby were hunters and wouldn't settle for second place.

On their first patrol in the Arizona Tom Casey took Ron Willoughby along as spotter with a reinforced squad from Hotel Company. The patrol leader was Sgt. Manual Ybarra from Hotel's 3rd platoon. Ybarra was a hard-charging



Gunnery Sergeant Mitchell at 1st Division Scout Sniper School with VC Moisin-Nagant 7.62 X 54mm Russian sniper rifle. This rifle performed close to U.S. 30.06 with 150-grain bullets. VC snipers killed many Marines with this WWII-era weapon.



Sergeant Tom Casey shot on USMC rifle team winning Wimbledon Cup in 1964-65 with 2nd Marines at Camp Lejeune. One of the all-time great Vietnam snipers and, along with Mitchell and Ron Willoughby, part of a lethal trio.

Mexican-American from southern New Mexico who worked 500 acres of wheat field with his father who farmed the old-fashioned way with a pitchfork and plenty of sweat. Manny had grown up tough as shoe leather and wasn't bothered by the heat or the cold in Vietnam. Sergeant Ybarra struck out from An Hoa down the runway and through the sentry bunkers on the edge of the strip. He lead his Marines through the double apron of concertina and down the muddy, red clay sloop that served as the main artery tying An Hoa's supply lines to the distant Marine base at Da Nang.

Arizona Territory

After two hours they passed the Marine outpost at Phu Loc 6 that held the high ground 200 meters above the stretch of rice paddies that ran a kilometer or so to the east. At the end of the paddies the Song Thu Bon river ran in a giant loop south of An Hoa and north of Phu Loc 6 running closer than half a kilometer to the backside or northern perimeter of Phu Loc 6. Across the Song Thu Bon lay the expanse of contested or enemy territory known colloquially to the Marines of 2/5 as the Arizona Territory, or simply the Arizona. In the Arizona Territory all men were assumed to be gunfighters and this area had always been a "free fire" zone meaning anyone with a weapon was fair game. Snipers instinctively liked this type of setting as it readily lent itself to *beaucoup* opportunities to smoke Charlie's ass.

Tom Casey and Willoughby knew that the combat here in the Arizona Territory would bring an entirely new level of ferocity compared to the ambushes and short savage firefights experienced at Hill 35 near Chu Lai. The Marines forded the river on an old rope bridge and watching carefully for mines and booby traps that could be uncovered by the monsoon rains, the snipers felt their way deeper into the jungled hills.

Sergeant Ybarra stopped the column a klick farther up the rough village trail and told Casey and Willoughby to drop out of the column before they broke out into the next section of rice fields. Casey nodded and clutched the forearm of his Remington bolt-gun with a towel draped over the scope to keep the moisture at bay. He had 300-meter battle sights marked on the scope by one clearly recognizable knife scratch into the metal surrounding the elevation knob. Six hundred meters was identified by two scratches into the black anodized aluminum. If Tom Casey got a chance to make a quick kill at 500 meters he would leave the 300-meter dope on the scope and hold off above the target a yard and still get a torso hit. The match-grade ammunition for the Remingtons had a heavy bullet weight of 168 grains and would carry the distance up to 1,000 meters with sufficient energy to kill the enemy.

Ron Willoughby led Casey off the trail through a small clearing and up a tight trail that wound up the hillside to their right. Looking back, Casey and Willoughby could see the patrol from Hotel Company winding its way across muddy rice paddy dikes into the heart of the Arizona

Territory. A large village loomed across the distant paddies and Casey tucked his sniper team into a leafy hide about 200 feet up the hillside. Casey's gaze swept across the paddies and noted the long treeline that had been planted to shield the ricefields from wind. The treeline was cloaked in a thick mist and further exploration wasn't possible as the snipers eyes ran along the paddies' edges seeking movement.

Ron Willoughby caressed the cold stock of his M14 rifle and felt comfort in the knowledge that his rifle could also reach any enemy threat that presented itself in the valley below. All of a sudden Tom Casey looked far away toward the village and realized that the patrol from Hotel was winding its way somewhere into the hostile jungle too far away to help. Casey and Willoughby felt alone and took comfort in the others' company and their proficiency with their weapons.

Casey reflected a minute and smiled about all the state-side bullshit he had heard about lone sharpshooters who had gone out alone for days on end and killed a multitude of enemy soldiers all the while escaping without a scratch on themselves or their rifle. Every war fostered the legends both true and fictional. Vietnam was no different, but Casey felt sure that no single man could ever come into or out of the Arizona Territory alive after killing an enemy soldier and revealing his position. No, siree, that kind of crapola was best kept to comic books for little kids. This kind of sniper business was the no-bullshit variety and the tension and fear made Casey's muscles tighten and ache.

Failure to move and shoot or do something was the real enemy that created the fear before action. Once the bullets started flying both Casey and Willoughby forgot their instinctive survival desire to flee and immersed themselves in the equally strong desire to kill.

Willoughby's elbow nudged Casey out of his moment of reflection as a file of soldiers stepped out of the treeline and turned away from the snipers hillside lookout to follow the Marines of Sgt. Ybarra's patrol. Casey whispered, "Man, those men are armed. I can see weapons even at this distance. We got to warn the patrol or those bastards will sneak up on their rear and cut them off from us."

A Hit


Ron Willoughby had his binoculars clasped tightly in his fists and stared along the edge of the ricefields at the column of Viet Cong. He took his glasses down and spoke in a muted tone. "I make them about 500 meters at the rear and 600 meters when their point man crosses that big dike trail. See if you can target the length of their column and you'll hit somebody and Sgt. Ybarra will be forewarned. What do you think!"

Casey looked at Willoughby like he'd just farted or something and replied, "I think it's a great fucking idea.



Sniper Ken Barden near An Hoa, Arizona Territory, 1967.

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A Small, Tight Circle Of Warriors

Kayak's Final Journey Part II

BY COMMANDER CHIP BECK, USNR (RET.)

Last month, CDR Chip Beck, USNR (Ret.) recounted his fateful last meeting with George 'Kayak' Bacon — who was Beck's former colleague in the CIA's clandestine paramilitary units during the Indochina War. Bacon was killed in combat in Angola on 13 February 1976 — just three weeks after their meeting.

In that account, the author authoritatively answered a quarter-century-old question, revealing Bacon was what he claimed to be — an independent freedom fighter and war correspondent.

Now, the saga continues, as Beck reveals how and why he ventured to Cuba to seek out the men who killed Bacon; not for revenge, but for their help — as a small tight circle of warriors — to find Bacon's body and bring it home.

In the 25 years since George 'Kayak' Bacon died in an armed confrontation with a Cuban patrol near Cuimba, Angola, the U.S. Government — that once put him in uniform and later sent him on secret intelligence missions — never took steps to locate Bacon's remains or retrieve them for a proper burial in the Bacon family's cemetery in Rehobeth, Massachusetts.

Bacon was not a secret operative or active-duty soldier when he died. But he was an American citizen and a veteran. That alone should have prompted action.

If Bacon's mortal remains can be retrieved — as many POW and MIA families from the Korean and Vietnam Wars know — there would be a lifting of an emotional burden for an elderly couple named George Bacon, Sr. and his wife, Geraldine.

Filling the void that has too long lingered in their hearts, year after year, would come about because the man called 'Kayak,' who was not quite 30 when he died in combat far away, was the only son of these two New Englanders. He was their little boy, the six-year-old who learned to ride a bicycle, the 10-year-old who skinned his knees, and the young man who went off to war for his country — not once, but two or three times.

Their child — for that is how all mothers and fathers see their off-spring, no matter how tall and strapping they might be — went off to war one last time, not for America, but for ideals, principles, and a people he did not even know.

In the quarter-century since his death, rarely a day passes that these kind and gentle people do not grieve over the terrible and tragic loss of their boy.

As George, Sr. and Geraldine, now in their late-70s, face their own mortality with each passing day, they long for the day when their beloved son, whom they affectionately call 'Georgie,' — as though he was just down the block playing baseball with neighborhood kids — will come home to them, to lay at rest in the same hallowed ground that someday will cradle them.

It's only a symbolic return, they know. In their hearts, they pray their Georgie is in heaven, and that when their own time comes, they will see him again in the hereafter. Until then, like most mere mortals, they long for a symbolic piece of their son to return. The sight of a flag-draped casket carried down the ramp of a C-130 Hercules, or lowered to a final resting place by an honor guard, however agonizing at the moment, helped heal thousands of broken hearts.

Their dream is not a morbid fantasy, but a time-honored dream of all mothers and fathers who lost sons in war. They long for tangible traces of loved ones, however incomplete, to signify the final homecoming.

George Bacon fought in Vietnam as a Special Forces "Green Beret." He served in the 'Secret War' in Laos from 1971-1973 as a CIA Paramilitary advisor for General Vang Pao's Hmong guerrilla army, distracting North Vietnamese Army Divisions and preventing them from waltzing into South Vietnam. He continued efforts to help the Vietnamese and Laotians until Indochina came tumbling down in April 1975.



George Bacon, Jr. After loyal service to the U.S., CIA wrote him off, failing even to place a condolence call to his grieving parents.

courtesy George Bacon, Sr./Political Graphics.

In spite of his service, neither the U.S. Government, CIA, State Department, or the American Red Cross ever saw fit to ask the Angolan government to deliver the remains of an American citizen to his native soil.

This is so because Kayak violated a cardinal rule of the Intelligence world. He went 'freelance,' to help people he considered oppressed, when 'Uncle Sugar' told him not to go out and play.

It's Dangerous To Be 'Civilians'

I saw it happen before. When South Vietnam was coming apart at the seams, and within days before the North Vietnamese juggernaut entered Saigon, another CIA legend went on his own steam, retired Paramilitary (PM) officer Tucker Gougemann. He, too, rebuffed Agency orders telling him to evacuate Vietnam.

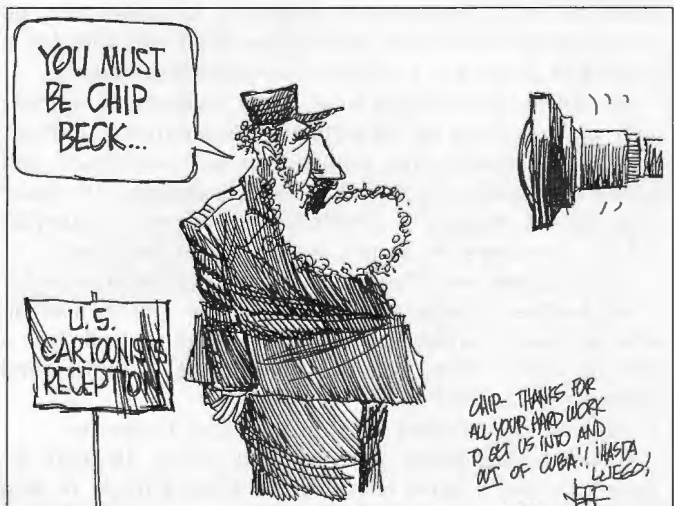
Tucker, a World War II soldier and veteran of every Asian war since 1945, was a colorful and effective SpecOps officer throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Finally forced to retire, he stuck

around Saigon to aid people he cared for — children, refugees, and orphans.

As Saigon disintegrated, the CIA Station in Saigon, whose leadership unnecessarily jeopardized scores of employees by not forcing 'non-essential personnel' out of the country, ordered combat veteran Tucker Gougemann to get on a plane out of the country, 'or else.'

'Or else,' according to Gougemann's protégé, and my mentor, Bill Buckley, meant that he was on his own if he got into trouble.

Tucker got into trouble all right. He was arrested by the North Vietnamese in May 1975, shortly after Saigon fell. He was detained while trying to get women and children out of Vietnam to safety. The NVA and Hanoi's intelligence services, whose agents had long reported on Tucker's well-known activities in anti-communist operations, did not, could not,



Jeff Parker, Florida Today, by permission

Editorial cartoon of Fidel's imagined reaction to Chip Beck's second visit to Cuba, with an entourage of editorial cartoonists. Cartoon playfully depicts Beck's open and aboveboard quest to document life on the island.

and would not believe that Tucker was 'retired.'

That was just a cover, they said. For 16 months they kept Tucker as a prisoner of war (POW). They beat him, broke his bones, and finally tortured him to the point where he died in August 1976 at the age of 62.

Like George Bacon, Tucker Gouglemann was viewed as a 'civilian' by the USG.

On the other hand, Jim Lewis, a fellow PM officer to whom I talked on the day he was captured by the NVA in early April 1975, was treated differently.

Lewis, whose capture was facilitated by his own unnecessary bravado and a meaningless foray into an area that was collapsing even before he ventured into it, was provided a much different level of support by the CIA and by Henry Kissinger's Paris connections.



Government/Political Graphics

During Jim's 9-months of captivity, there was furious behind-the-scenes activity to get him released. This was while the U.S. Government began to maintain that 'no Americans or POWs were held against their will after 1973, or the end of the war, a premise that continues today.

Jim Lewis was released from North Vietnamese captivity after eight months of back-channel negotiations in Paris. (One might wonder what 'points' were being discussed, and tossed back and forth, during these deliberations. We know what the U.S. wanted — simply Lewis's release — but what did the Vietnamese want, ask, get, or *not* get, in return?)

The CIA and State Department negotiators went to bat for Lewis because, in spite of his recklessness, and the foolishness of Station superiors who allowed him to walk into a trap, he was an 'active' officer at the time of his capture and captivity. Tucker was not.

That difference saved Jim's life, and cost Tucker his.

Tucker Gouglemann was a retired officer. He told the Station to take a flying leap. No one lifted a finger to help him, except his old friend Bill Buckley, and that was not enough.

George Bacon was an ex-officer who resigned, and he essentially told CIA to take a similar airborne flight. When

he 'bought the farm,' his old bosses essentially left him planted in the fields.

Even Bill Buckley, who was eventually kidnapped by Hezbollah terrorists in Beirut, and tortured to death over 15 months, never received effective help for his rescue that was required for success — due in part to his habit of 'telling things like they were' inside the Agency. Had it not been for one man pushing from the inside, as Bill requested if he were kidnapped, the Agency would not have even bothered to get Buckley's remains back in 1991.

The Wrong Thing To Do

When the news broke over the international wires that a man named George Bacon had been killed in Angola, someone in the State Department called Geraldine Bacon, Kayak's mother, to tell her that her 'husband' had been killed.

CIA HQS, which had better information, thanks to the residual presence of PM officers in Zaire and the background knowledge of the Kinshasa Station Chief, did not even bother to call George, Sr. and Geraldine to provide them information or offer its condolences as a gesture of compassion for the parents of a former

The body of a KIA merc in Angola which, for a period of time, was misidentified as the body of George Bacon.

Intelligence Star recipient.

It was not until George, Sr. called the CIA HQS main number and demanded to speak to someone in charge — anyone at all — that he finally got some answers. At first, when he asked for people whom Kayak had served under, Mr. Bacon was simply given the standard reply that 'no one by that name works here,' he told me.

Finally, as a gesture of goodwill from the Special Operations Group, one of Kayak's former colleagues and training officers, a PM Case Officer known as 'Mr. Clean' (for his physical resemblance to the genie in the TV commercial) went to Massachusetts to talk to and console the parents.

'Clean' did little more than eventually walk away with Kayak's address book, phone numbers, and other documents, which he never returned after borrowing them. He never suggested ideas on how to get Kayak's remains back, nor to the parent's knowledge or my recollection, did he ever propose that HQS initiate such a proposal to the MPLA in Luanda, the Cubans, the Russians, the Portuguese, the UN, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Gulf Oil in Cabinda, the French Government, whose own mercenaries had helped the MPLA, or anyone else.

As the Agency demonstrated in the cases of Jim Lewis and Tucker Gougleman, where there's a will, there's a way. Where there's not, there's not. This is not criticism.

It's just the facts of life facing soldiers of fortune.

A Matter Of Conscience

Over the years, I never felt responsible for Kayak's fate in Angola. Although I failed to talk him out of his venture, I did

more than most to try to prevent his suicide mission.

Still, he was a friend and a former comrade-in-arms. I've always felt bad for his parents, and uncomfortable with the lack of humanity and caring displayed by his former government-component employers — and even by a few of his old colleagues who were in a better position to press for the recovery of his remains than I was at the time.

In the decades since he died, I followed the ebb and flow of Angola's political tide, and frequently thought about Kayak's body, lying thousands of miles from home. Was it in an unmarked grave and unrecoverable, I wondered? Or was he carefully put into the ground by military or intelligence officers who had the forethought to mark the spot and record its location on some document — just in case they ever needed to prove something for their own benefit?

After my old friend Bill Buckley died in captivity in the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon, I pressed the Agency for years not to forego the effort to retrieve his remains. I obtained Buckley's dental records when HQS had no idea where to look. I sought leads from representatives of radical Arab governments on where his remains might be and how to retrieve them — leads that turned out to be accurate in the end. And finally, when the hostage saga was almost over, I reminded high level CIA officials, much to their annoyance, that Buckley's body, and that of Lieutenant Colonel Rich Higgins, in addition to the remaining live hostages, should be part of any deal to end the seven-year old ordeal.

In 1993, the CIA and the Defense Department, offered early retirements to select employees who met certain quali-

fications of service time or age. As a member of the Clandestine Service with longer than five years overseas duty, I was normally eligible to retire at age 50 and 20 years of service. At age 47, with 27 years military and intelligence service, and well in excess of five years overseas, I qualified for CIA's 'early out.'

In an unusual move for most Agency retirees, I went back on active Navy Duty for three years, and my final assignment was working as a POW Special Investigator for the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO). It was during this tour of duty that I again came into contact with old POW cases that I knew from my six years service in-and-around Indochina — Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

Going back over the unclassified aspects of the Lewis and Gouglemann cases, and adding to them the cases of Marc Filloux, Morgan Donahue, David Hrdlicka, Emmitt Kaye, Air America pilots Ritter and Townley, and other people I had known personally or had known about, would occasionally take me back to the case of George Bacon.

The Cuba Connection Resurfaces

This was particularly true when I happened to be looking into the role of a Cuban interrogation team that was assigned to extract anti-war statements and confessions of propaganda value from 20 American POWs at a prison in Hanoi the POWs called 'The Zoo.'

In a routine email request to a DPMO analyst named Bob Destatte, I asked in June 1996 if I could review the 'Cuba files' presumably on hand in his section, to see if there were clues in the documents that might shed light on the POWs who were transferred to the Soviet Union during the course of the Vietnam War.

Half the response I expected, but the other half was astounding for its absurdity. There were no transfers of

SOF's man in Havana, Chip Beck, taking in some of the sights while his mind focuses on an infinitely more somber, and important, mission: that of securing Cuban assistance in recovering the remains of his friend.

courtesy author



courtesy author



courtesy Jose Mari Press Institute



courtesy author

During opening session of the First International War Correspondents Convention, author (center) listens to statement read by Cuban journalist Raul Valdez Vivos, known as the 'Ambassador to the Jungle.' (left) Beck reviews his notes on George Bacon and those on various interviews with Bacon and others in his room at Havana Libre Hotel, formerly the Havana Hilton. (below) Making friends. As a U.S. Navy combat artist and professional editorial cartoonist, author made it a habit to meet, greet and draw for children he encountered. Here he draws a cartoon for a little boy in San Antonio de los Baños, in western Cuba. Boy is wearing "Simpsons" t-shirt which somehow beat the embargo.

POWs to the Soviet Union, and there were no Cubans in Vietnam during the war,' Destatte intoned authoritatively in a responding email.

I knew from my own intelligence experience in Indochina and from conversations with Mike Benge, a friend and former POW who had been interrogated by a Cuban officer in 1969, that Destatte's statement was so incredibly false as to immediately raise suspicions. Everett Alvarez, another POW who was confronted by the Cubans at the Zoo, scoffs at such a statement. (Note: Even Cuban officials, to whom this reporter talked in Havana, laughed at the Destatte's statement and called it absurdly false.)

During a series of e-mail challenges created to force Destatte to commit to paper, his false story quickly unraveled. The nonsense he tried to foist off on ordinary family members did not work as well when he encountered someone with more Intelligence experience than his own.

The significance of the exchanges with Destatte on Cuba's role in Vietnam, as far as the George Bacon case went, was located in a box of 'hidden DPMO Cuban files' that I eventually uncovered and had subpoenaed by Congressman Bob Dornan's Subcommittee on Military Personnel, which was essentially the House of Representatives' POW/MIA Oversight component.

As a POW investigator with a Top Secret clearance and a 'need to know,' I should have been provided the Unclassified



courtesy author

Cuban files within DPMO. However, since the information contained in the files, like so many other things concealed by DPMO, contradicted years of official statements, I had to go to Congress to obtain what was just around the corner in my own OSD office!

When Congressional staffer Al Santoli and I went through the box of subpoenaed documents after spreading them out on the floor of Dornan's office, we came across the name of two Cuban journalists, Raul Valdez Vivo and Marta Rojas. This couple, who are famous war correspondents in



Author and a MINREX official view art and photo display of works by other artists who have viewed wars firsthand.

Cuba, had interviewed U.S. POWs held by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam's Tay Ninh Province in 1965 — a full two years before the 20 POWs were interrogated by a three-man Cuban team at 'The Zoo,' in Hanoi. Mike Bengé met 'his Cuban' in 1969.

Far from 'not being involved in Vietnam,' as Destatte initially claimed, my discoveries clearly revealed that Cubans had come into contact with American POWs at least in 1965, 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Shortly after I surfaced the DPMO holdings on the Cuban documents, my active-duty time was up. I was due to retire the following month, November 1996, after 33 years in the Reserves. It was just as well, for my internal challenges to duplicitous members of the DPMO management team had worn out my welcome.

Still, the POW mystery, of which I had old insights and new ideas, intrigued me. With the help of writer Tom Clancy, I continued probing the mystery of America's unrepatriated POWs who were caught up in the Soviet Gulags from 1918 right through the Vietnam War.

I was also on a path leading to George Bacon.

One of the leads no one ever dared to follow was the Cuban angle. I decided to pursue that route along with some other promising avenues that DPMO had not wanted me to track. In fact, they had been so dead set against my pursuit of these leads, that some laws were apparently broken trying to sabotage my official investigations.

Freed from the DPMO bureaucracy and petty saboteurs, I was able to follow up the Cuban leads on my own. In the process, I learned that Raul Valdez, the senior Cuban journalist who entered South Vietnam with the National Liberation Front, had written two books about his 1960s-1970s exploits. One book, called *El Gran Secreto: Los Cubanos En El Camino de Ho Chi Minh*, revealed details of Havana's 11-year incountry alliance and side-by-side experiences with the Vietnamese in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

So much for Destatte's expert opinion, which he had

assured me his brother-in-law (a North Vietnamese official) had vouched for, that the Cubans were not in Vietnam.

Also interesting to me was Valdez' second book, called *El Fin De Los Mercenarios*. It was an account of the exploits, capture, and trial of the 13 mercenaries who had been with Kayak when he was killed. Both books were published by Havana, decades ago, and the copies I obtained were yellowed and worn. (In the 'mercenary' book, I found what might have been a single reference to Bacon, when one of his compatriots mentioned 'George.' However, since no last name was mentioned, the man might have referred to a European mercenary.)

Still, it was obvious from Valdez's descriptions — for which he personally traveled to Angola in 1976 and extensively interviewed all the captured mercenaries — that the Cuban military had captured the men, and had been in primary control when Kayak would have been killed. Oddly, the book did not delve into the dead ex-CIA officer's role with the mercenaries, which surprised me, since many parts of the book drifted over to such sidebar stories as the Bay of Pigs and other anti-Cuban or anti-Third World operations reportedly conducted by the CIA.

Why was Bacon's name left out of the book, I wondered?

Did Valdez have an 'operational reason' for not writing about Bacon's background? When George was killed, did the Cubans simply not know about his CIA credentials at the

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American Daniel Gearhart, executed by firing squad on 10 July 1976. His advertisement as a soldier for hire, which appeared in initial issues of Soldier Of Fortune, sealed his fate. Why he carried a copy of this ad on his person, where it was later discovered by his captors, no one knows.

Combat Sniper

Continued from page 75

What did you think I'd think?"

Willoughby who was just getting to know Casey pretty well looked pissed, "I think you better shoot now, Casey, cause those bastards are moving pretty fast and in another minute there ain't gonna be nothin' left to shoot at! What do you think about that shit?"

Sergeant Tom Casey didn't look at Ron Willoughby, but took the towel off the scope and raised the Remington to his shoulder and laid the barrel across a thick branch of a cedar tree to his front. The Viet Cong column was well past the 600-meter dike marker that Willoughby had estimated. Casey took the rifle off his shoulder and dialed in 600 meters of elevation. The wind was in his face and negligible. Casey held dead on the lead VC figuring that the bullet drop would take out the second man in the file. At 700 meters the bullet would fall maybe 45 inches, but he was shooting down-slope so the target would appear closer than it actually was perhaps out to 800 meters. The column had green uniforms and wore soft green hats. The column had seven men and a black-clad soldier who might have been a female Viet Cong nurse. Casey figured that it really didn't matter because they were all armed and the woman was a combatant and subject to the same harsh rules of survival that applied to everyone else in this crazy fucking war.

The crosshairs settled on the point-man's tunic and Casey took up the trigger slack until the rifle discharged. Willoughby thought the blast and concussion from the rifle was so loud in the eerie silence of the rice paddies that everyone in the world would know where he and Casey were emplaced.

When the rifle barrel settled again onto the point man there was a gap behind his position and a soldier lay sprawled on the trail while the other members of the Viet Cong patrol scattered into the treeline. The recoil of the rifle had lifted the scope off the target and Casey never saw the bullet strike. But there was no denying that the body of a Viet Cong soldier still lay immobile next to the paddies, while his comrades made a quick exit into the nearest cover. Tom Casey smiled and thought about carving a notch in the stock of his new Remington. No, on second thought Casey had to admit that that was a hell of a lucky shot in this kind of weather. He smiled thinking about all the talk

about checking out kills for documents and stupid stuff like that. Casey looked toward the treeline where the Viet Cong soldiers no doubt still waited for some stupid Marine to confirm the kill. As far as Willoughby and Casey were concerned the kill was plenty confirmed and if the son-of-a-bitch had any documents he could damn well keep 'em.

An hour later Manny Ybarra and the patrol from Hotel Company came toward the hill and waved for the snipers to join up. Casey noticed that Sergeant Ybarra had approached the sniper hide from the other side of the rice valley. Later Ybarra pointed out that the surest way to get ambushed is to come in from patrol using the same trails you went out on.

Manny Ybarra just smiled when Casey and Willoughby joined the patrol. "You guys saved our chili when you shot that gook. I owe you boys a couple of Schlitz beers when we get back to An Hoa. Remember, don't never come back the same way you go out. I didn't make it through the DMZ by being a dumb fuckin' Mexican. We got smart Mexicans, too. *Vamonos muchachos!*"

Tom Casey looked at Ron Willoughby and nodded toward Sergeant Ybarra who had tucked into the column behind John Lafley as the point stepped on the gas back to An Hoa. "I think if we stick with these guys we might just stay alive. What do you think?"

Ron Willoughby looked Tom Casey over and mimicked his best John Wayne impersonation. "I think this Sergeant Ybarra is no dumb enchilada. What do you think, you big fuckin' Gyrhead?"

Laughing, Casey and Willoughby humped home to An Hoa from their first patrol in the Arizona Territory. They were happy to be alive. And that's no shit.

Culbertson served as a rifleman, MOS 0311, with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division at An Hoa Combat Base, Republic of Vietnam from December 1966 until July 1967. Private First Class Culbertson saw combat action on Operation Tuscaloosa, 24-28 January 1967. He completed 1st Marine Division Scout Sniper School in Da Nang in March 1967. He received the secondary MOS 8541 (scout sniper). He served with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines on 11 major operations and was wounded in action earning three Purple Hearts. Culbertson was honorably discharged in 1971 at the rank of sergeant. ✕

U.S. Border Patrol

Continued from page 41

rants it, however, the agents can arm themselves with shotguns or the newly issued M4 carbines. "Illegal immigration is our primary mission, but we also wind up seizing more drugs and contraband than all of the other agencies combined. That's when it gets tight. Losing a drug load is a real hit in the pocket, and the potential for violence goes up," one agent remarked. "If we get wind that something serious is up, well, we have force multipliers that can be brought to bear," he commented, grinning. Sometimes, however, the border produces its own set of surprises.

In the wake of a \$200,000 bounty that Northern Mexican drug cartels posted on any Federal agent working the border, several armed incursions have occurred that seem to be targeted at the agents themselves. "I've seen sniper teams hop the border and run interference for shipments," an agent in a neighboring sector told SOF. "I've also seen an increase in hostile acts toward agents and even some attempts to hunt us down."

Indeed, during one well-publicized incident in Texas, two HUMVEES full of Mexican troops, led by a Lieutenant Colonel, chased and shot at an agent for 3 miles after driving through the border fence. After being apprehended, the State Department arrived, made profuse apologies all around and hustled the captured troops back to the Mexican side as quickly as possible. This unilateral move left the FBI a little steamed, as they have a legal mandate to question anyone involved in shooting at federal agents.

Again, on 24 October 2000, near San Diego, 10 Mexican Army soldiers armed with H&K G-3 rifles crossed the border. After setting up covering positions, the main element maneuvered and tried to capture two agents, who were forced to escape and evade through the scrub. They retreated back into Mexico when they couldn't find the agents and reinforcements arrived. Senior officials at the Department of Justice played down the incidents but stepped up efforts to improve communication and liaison with Mexican authorities.

In the Tucson Sector the new liaisons have apparently been working, with no incursions of note in the last year. "The Mexican authorities have been much more cooperative. It's to the point where we're vectoring them onto

crimes we see happening on their side of the border," another agent told us at Tucson HQ. "It's still a dangerous game, though. We've seen people setting up LP/OPs on the south side to ID our movements. They're basically LRRPs and we watch them very carefully."

Meet The Flintstones

"You know you're making an impact when you hear those kinds of things. They're getting frustrated," Agent Garland remarked when we brought it up. "With more agents putting on the pressure, we're disrupting their traffic. That's why we're seeing more aggression. More rockings, more drive-throughs and more broken windows." A quick look around the Douglas station motor pool confirmed that. Over half the fleet of Chevy and Ford SUVs had permanently attached riot cages reminiscent of Northern Ireland. In the Southwest desert, there is no shortage of rocks.

"When that's happening, we bring in our force multipliers and keep a sharp eye on our flanks. Many times when we're having rockings down here at the wall it's a diversion for something they're trying to move farther up the line. But we've got such a mobility advantage that many times we can run that down as well." Indeed, if it walks, runs or flies, the Border Patrol uses it. Everything from horses to helicopters is in the inventory.

But what the crossers really hate is the new fleet of Suzuki quad runners, or "Quad Squads," now deployed on every shift. These light ATVs are fitted with 340cc four-stroke engines and are so quick and agile that little in the desert stands a chance of outrunning them. It has to be one of the more enjoyable assignments in the Border Patrol. Every Quad Squad agent we spoke to loved the duty.

Usually operating in two-man teams, the "Quad Squads" are free to roam their assigned area, responding to hits from the control room or checking things out on their own. Their low silhouette makes them hard to detect in the scrub when they lay in ambush and come racing down on unsuspecting groups.

"They hate the quad runners more than anything else. They hate them so much that even the sound of them in an area has become a deterrent," Garland told us as we dismounted on the south side of I-80, ready to have another go at the group of runners. As good as the Quads are, though, heavily fenced areas at night are a major hazard for them, so we were on foot again.

Cat And Mouse

Barbed-wire fence of the night, number 10. Twang, tangle, stumble, fall, curse. We had been told that this would be like a game of cat and mouse. At least cats can see in the dark. Hopping in and out of the truck had ruined my night vision. What I was doing now was more like chasing quail, blindfolded, through a needle factory. This group would just not stop moving. Every time agents approached them, they scooted away south and zigged their way back north again for another try at the highway.

The controllers were guiding us in, but despite all the new technology, the agent's best weapon is still old-fashioned tracking and fieldcraft. While I had managed to get separated from the main body, Garland was leading Angelica through a crash course in old-time desert sign-cutting. He had picked up the trail about 100 meters in and ran it right to where the group had been holed-up. Not once did he use his flashlight. After pausing to point out the different types of tracks left behind, control reported that the "Quad Squad" had pounced on a group of 25 men and women north of the road. Meeting back at the truck, he assured us that time was getting short for the runners. "As long as I keep them below the highway, sooner or later they'll either give up and go home or we'll get them." No worries.

Here To Save As Well As Serve

North of the road, the larger group had apparently been abandoned by their guide and the "Quad Squad" had little trouble chasing them down. Field interviews determined their origin as Chiapas, scene of a bitter peasant uprising several years ago and repressive military occupation ever since. Newly elected President Vincente Fox had reportedly pulled the army out, but the entrants said the situation was still desperate. "The military is gone but now there's no food. We're starting to starve, so we came north," one of the detainees reported. Huddled together, dejected and cold, they were truly a pathetic sight, completely unprepared for the environment they had been abandoned to.

"My mandate is to enforce the law, but I've also got a lot of compassion for these people. All of us do. We see them, we know what's driving them here," Garland reflected as the agents took down basic information. Other agents we spoke to echoed his sentiments. They were here as much to protect the

entrants from the hazards of the desert and indentured servitude, as they were to enforce the law. "We get a bad rap in the media for stopping these people," one agent complained. "But tell me, where are they when these people are stuck 30 miles from nowhere, lost, with no water?"

"New York," I replied.

All agreed that this was not simply a border control issue but a problem with roots on both sides of the fence. "When there's some chance for these people to make an honest living at home, our job will be much easier," a young agent told us. "At the same time, U.S. businesses have proven that they will do whatever they can to up their profit margin. If that means using quasi slave labor, well, they've proven that they're willing to do that."

Bird In Hand

We hadn't been with the Chiapas group for long when Agent Garland's radio squawked out the news that our runners had finally been bagged. We mounted-up and ducked back across the highway to find them sitting in a group under the supervision of several tired but victorious agents. As Garland had said, they were mostly young and all male, probably heading to the farm fields of California or the construction sites of Phoenix. "No *comprende*" was the reply when I inquired about the going rates for hanging drywall.

Dejected by their capture, for them, the chase was over. Most were so cold they could barely sign their names on the field record forms. Between them they couldn't have stitched together a poncho. Like the last group, jeans, a sweater and maybe a thin blanket were their only fieldgear.

"Tonight has been slow," was the comment as we headed back to the station. "After the New Year things will really pick up again. Some think that we're the solution to this. We're not. The solution lies with the nations who border us, and those parties in the U.S. that take advantage of this kind of traffic. Until those things change, on both sides, we'll be doing this night after night, 365 days a year."

Note: Because of the increasing risk to agents of the U.S. Border Patrol and illegal entrants, SOF has made every effort to conceal their appearances.

Jim and Angelica covered the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia together for many years. Angelica is a native of Zagreb, Croatia. ✕

Or, take along a buddy, and don't tell him you signed up for the \$2,750 package that ends with both engines switched off and a dead-stick, autorotation landing. (In this case, his Depends are your responsibility).

Pound for pound, tooling around in a T-72 or a BMP combat infantry vehicle is a good buy. Driving six clicks in a T-72 is worth \$350, or you can select a BMP for only \$200. Firing an RPG-7 will set you back \$150 (you are not allowed to potshot the T-72 you couldn't afford), and firing the 30mm on a BMP will set you back \$180 a round. Firing the 125 smoothbore cannon on a tank is an impressive blast for \$300.

For the discerning small-arms enthusiast there is a wide range of hardware to play with, but the prices are oddly set. For instance, one round of 7.62x54R in a Dragunov will set you back a whopping \$20, or one round of 7.62x39 in an SKS is a hefty \$4 — but for only \$8 you can fire a six-round burst in an AK-74. Go figure. For a mere \$2 you will get issued one round like Barney Fife for a Nagant revolver or a TT Tokarev pistol. \$15 will get you six rounds to rip through a PPSH. They also offer a good lineup of rifle-caliber machine guns, from an MG-34 in 7.92x59 to an aging Maxim in 7.62x54R — plus the usual suspects in a variety of calibers such as an RPK, NSV a ZPU and even an AGS-17.

Speaking of potshooting a T-72, it is worth noting here that being fiscally sound is not the only entrance requirement. One must also be physically and mentally sound, or reasonably close to it, and pass medical tests and pass a screening and security check by the local heat.

A Day In the Life Of Ivan Denisevich

Oddly enough, one of the most popular offerings is a holiday called "The Extremely Ascetic Life of A Rank-and-File Soldier." Participants turn to at 0630, do the morning exercise routine, share a spartan breakfast with regular Ukrainian G.I.s, and spend a day in the Carpathian Steppes doing shit details. Thus far, clients have ranged in age from 20 to 53, and included curious former servicemen on a busman's holiday, or bored civvies who want to try something different.

But the long green is most apt to come from the well-heeled tourists



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who want to play with toys. And, of course, it is hoped there will be a synergism with marketplace exposure for Ukrspetsexport's wares. For years, leading-edge weapons, in particular missiles, were produced for the Soviet Union in the Ukraine but, of course, marketed through Moscow. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the world market for former-Soviet arms was garnered by Moscow, who had an intact merchandising apparatus. Ukraine has some catching up to do in the promotional arena, and like any other retail endeavor, the three rules for success are exposure, exposure, and exposure. Noted Heorhiy Mazurov of Ukrspetsexport, "We have to use every chance to promote our arms. We also want to show that our armed forces exist and are able to defend the country."

Trading Cold War For Cold Cash

There are many harsh realities in countries of the former Soviet Union today, and the leading one is that the transition to a market economy, in a country with no institutional memory of free enterprise, can be a tough row to hoe. When *nobody* has any money, there is no money to flow from hand to hand, lubricating the wheels of productivity, and without productivity there is no wealth to share. *Duh-uh*. To those raised in the free market this goes without saying, but to those with no tradition of individual — or even corporate — enterprise such basics never occur. That the Ukrainian military has had the insight to capitalize — pun intended — on what assets they have shows an encouraging insight and flexibility.

With a declining population of some 50 million and an active force of

400,000 (half what it was in 1991), and a faltering economy, Ukraine is hard-pressed to fund their military. They were slated to spend U.S. \$441 million in 2000 (in local funds that's 2.4 billion hryvnias), and of this the military was expected to raise some 900 million hryvnias on its own, by hauling freight (an army has trucks, right?) and using their various facilities for repair work. But those were "projected" funds, with the military actually getting only about 60%. It was time to get creative.

Noted the Deputy Commander of the Desna training ground, Lieutenant Colonel Yuri Dumansky, "We need to earn additional funds to maintain weapons and protect combat capability ... We were forced to look for unorthodox methods ways to earn money, and have placed our hopes with 'military tourism.' "Why hasn't the U.S. Army recruiting command thought of this? Let prospective recruits get a taste ... and pay for it, instead of letting million-dollar contracts for ad agencies to come up with lame slogans. The Ukrainian military is preparing to handle up to a thousand affluent tourists a month, and inquiries pour in from all industrialized states.

Because initiative and flexibility are two traits the communists tried to breed out of the Ukrainian people for three generations, killing millions in the process, it is gratifying to find these traits still in the gene pool, and we wish this enterprise well.

Brilliant, in fact. We wish them every success.

Globe-trotting Frank Hopkins is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

The Locals Are Friendly

Continued from page 66

Arrive hungry and prepared to accept all food and drink. Ukrainians will feed, and feed, and feed. Better to take several small servings so they know you liked it, and clean your plate. Expect your drink to be topped off continually — do not empty it unless you want more. Refusing food may be considered rude, as food is the ultimate hospitality in a nation where millions were starved to death by the Russians in the process of communization in the 1930s, and where advancing Nazis stole an entire year's harvest.

Compliment the cook on the food, and parents on their children, but do not compliment them on any of their belongings, as they may offer it to you.

It is polite to share snacks and smokes with those around you. Don't bring them out unless you want to share. When dining out at an upscale restaurant, expect your coat, briefcase or baggage to be checked: no pet cats in, no silver and crystal out!

Business dress is conservative: Do not take off a suit coat unless invited. Business cards should be English on one side, Ukrainian on the other. It doesn't matter if you don't speak their language, but it is important to show you know they do.

Do not stick your thumb between your index and second finger, as this is a very rude gesture — rude enough I could never get a local to tell me exactly what it meant. If you mash your thumb in a door, hold it with the other hand or put it in your pocket. Don't even think about playing "got'cha nose" with a cute little kid. His daddy might feel obliged to get violently protective.

There are more freelancers than licensed taxis, and they're cheaper. But don't get in a POV with more than two people in it. Ukraine has a zero-tolerance policy for drinking and driving. None. No breathalyzer. Smell like booze or beer behind the wheel and you're going to jail.

Always take your own toilet paper and soap along on the train. In fact, it's a good idea to bring it from home if you think the local products might not be up to your standard.

Be flexible and polite. Enjoy. Expect to make some long-term friends. You'll probably be treated like the prodigal son. — FH.

Battle Blades

Continued from page 28

tioners among the European gentry.

The American frontier proved to be the perfect environment for the development of the ultimate fighting knife and also for the most effective means of its deployment. In Europe, for the most part, the gentry succeeded in keeping these fencing skills away from the lower social classes of citizenry. In America, it was quite different. New Orleans was essentially a microcosm of European culture on American soil, and when the fencing masters of Europe crossed the Atlantic and began to ply their trade in this city, the secrets of successful blade combat began to emerge on a broader scale.

Once the carefully guarded fencing principles were available to the rough and tumble element of riverfront New Orleans and the Natchez Trace, proper knife technique rapidly developed. In this environment there were no religious, cultural, or warrior codes to restrict the effective development or dissemination of the brutally effective techniques as they emerged.

Proper knife technique and fencing technique are not one and the same, but both have at their core the need to steal reach and distance from the opponent. The easiest way to steal reach from your opponent is to simply have a blade that is longer than his. If you have a Bowie Knife with a blade 11 inches long and your opponent has a boot dagger that has a 5-inch blade because he thinks it is easier to carry, then you have a very real tactical advantage. You can now reach him a lot easier than he can reach you. The other methods of stealing reach and distance involve proper footwork, deception, and proper application of timing. Though largely unknown at this time, these techniques are currently being taught.

There is also the matter of using the blade itself in the most efficient manner possible. There is a flow, or series of cuts with a Bowie knife that enables a skilled practitioner to deliver five separate and distinct cuts in just over one half of a second. I personally know several men who have been electronically timed in the delivery of a five cut flow in .58 to .59 seconds. The backcut technique with a Bowie knife can actually be delivered so quickly that it is impossible for the human eye to follow, and what the eye cannot see, the body cannot react to and avoid.

Speed is a vital part of the equation, but the ability to deliver these strikes without jeopardizing ones self is also necessary if you yourself are to avoid getting cut. Proper instruction also provides evasion and avoidance techniques, for in proper Bowie technique, as you deliver a blow, you are at that same instant taking steps to avoid being hit by your opponent. Most of these moves are subtle, and very difficult to see, even when done in slow motion. They cannot be learned from a book or photograph and while video instruction is available, a true in-depth understanding of them can only be transferred by personal instruction, either in a group setting or one on one. The real beauty of this system lies in its simplicity. While it is subtle, it is not necessarily complex and is easily taught and learned.

As any new technique begins to emerge, there are always those who want to jump on the bandwagon and make a fast buck. In that vein, there are a number schools springing up that purport to offer proper Bowie instruction. I will recommend two at the present time, and both are well established and have earned solid marks for accomplishment. Your money will be well spent by attending either of these programs, and you could hardly do better than to take them both.

Cold Steel has developed a training program they call their "Cut and Don't Be Cut" seminar. It is a good, solid program that is well worth two days of your time and the tuition. For more information contact Cold Steel at (800) 255-4716. Videos are also available.

Combat Technologies holds their famed Riddle of Steel as well as offering individual, personalized instruction in true Bowie technique. The Riddle of Steel has become the must-attend event for those who seek advanced Bowie studies. Videos are also available. Comtech can be reached at (541) 938-2175. You can email them at comtech@bmi.net.

You can get your Bowie knife on line from Bayou Lafourche Knife Works. This is a really neat cutlery shop with competitive prices carrying over 30 different brand names of product. They stock the complete Cold Steel line, as well as the Ontario Hell's Belle and Gambler. Get your knife at www.knifeworks.com or call them at (888) 225-9775.

If you are serious about elevating your knife skills to the highest level, get a good fighting Bowie and learn how to use it. This is your roadmap on how to get there. ☞

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War Dogs

Continued from page 55

mer prisoner-of-war Wynand du Toit, who sat out the war in an Angolan death cell, or Parachute Regiment Major Cobus Claassens could command five or six thousand dollars a month. "Big bucks" though, wasn't the norm.

Fighting Higher For Higher Wages

It was different in the air. Helicopter gunship pilots like Charlie Tate, Arthur Walker or Neall Ellis could, in theory, notch up more than \$100,000 a year. As with their counterparts, it was tax-free, though in truth, contracts rarely lasted long enough to score well. Also, living conditions, food and water in some of these countries were often grim. While the food in Angola was passable, EO units in Sierra Leone had to learn to eat like the natives, because for much of the time — especially beyond Freetown — there was little else. "You get used to it," said Cobus Claassens, who spent a year with EO fighting the RUF. In fact, he told me that there are now some West African dishes that he couldn't live without.

Most of the mercenary airmen took their chances, though risk was always a factor. Contact with others out of their immediate areas of operations were often tenuous, if only because black soldiers on the "Dark Continent" are inherently suspicious of white men carrying guns. None of it was made any easier by the fact that few of these war dogs could speak the language. In places like the Congo (French) and Angola (Portuguese), that was crucial if you were to survive, never mind radio comms with an outlying military post where the commander is rabidly anti-white and controls the only supply of fuel for 500 miles.

Also, if something went sour, search and rescue throughout almost the entire subcontinent is non-existent. Consequently, if you go down, you're on your own. Every one of these men has his stock of war stories and some will curl hair.

I know of at least three instances of mercenary soldiers having been killed and eaten. Speak to the locals and they will tell you that it's all part of the great jungle mystique. To consume the body and soul of your adversary gives you his "strength" and makes for powerful *muti* or "medicine," they reckon.

In essence, the mercenary types that I've encountered in the score or so of

wars that I've covered over the past 35 years have really not been all that different from any regular U.S. Army, British Royal Marine Commando or United Nations troop from countries around the world. Sitting in with a planning group at U.S. Army Operational HQ in Mogadishu, Somalia in the early '90s was much the same as being with a crowd of Her Majesty's officers at Lungi Airport some 10 years later. So, too, with a planning group of the army of El Salvador, gathered around maps in the control room in the eastern city of San Miguel when that insurgency was at its worst. Bob MacKenzie organized that one.

While flying combat in a rickety old Mi-24 helicopter gunship with Neall Ellis in Sierra Leone in the summer of 2000, we shared an operations and map room with British Army elements (including Special Forces) at Cockerill Army Headquarters in Freetown. To some of us, we might have been back home. Interestingly, Whitehall asked a few questions about what it termed "the mercenary connection" but the bowler-hatted ones were never told the real story while the war went on.

The Brotherhood Of Arms

It's to be expected, perhaps, that mercenaries — officers and men alike — as with regular troops, tend to share a common empathy.

It's what caused them to enlist and don a uniform in the first place: the attraction of a fine tradition, the lore of yesterday's battles and, to some, the discipline. Also, mercs, like regulars, have similar foibles. So, too, with aspirations. Back home both sets of individuals have families, wives, girlfriends (and in one or two notable cases, even among the hired guns, *boyfriends*).

Many of them are parents. Their fears for the future, like yours and mine, are identical. And while government troops are subject to their respective government laws, mercenaries, too, of late, have increasingly become answerable to international law. One of the last documents signed by Clinton before he left the White House, was a Human Rights bill involving war crimes.

Ultimately, this legislation and its international ramifications will bring some of the transgressors to justice. The "brutality of war," as Sloban Milosovic is about to find out, no longer covers a multitude of sins.

Al Venter is SOF's Contributing Editor for Africa. ✕

I Was There

Continued from page 17

"Patrol Base Hill." One side rose up from a large pond fed by the creek running down through "Infiltration Alley" from North Korea. When things got slow we'd joke about notifying the Battalion Tactical Operations Center (TOC) and reporting a North Korean mini-sub and two frogmen.

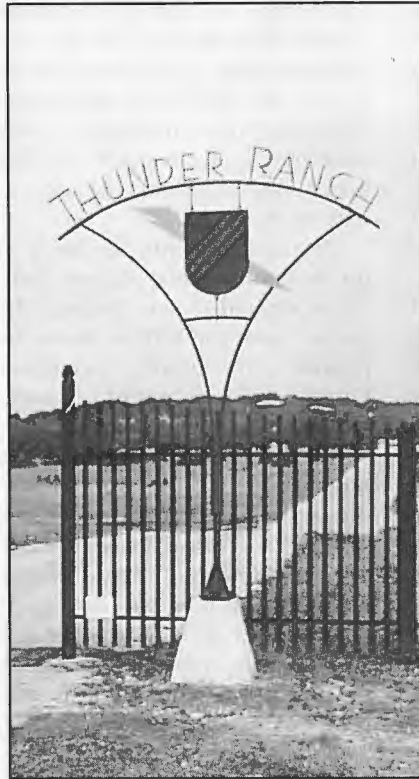
A few nights later another platoon actually made a similar report in all seriousness. You've got to watch those late night ambush hallucinations. I think maybe somebody was toking some homegrown Korean "happy smoke" on that one.

We set up a 360-degree perimeter and after a few hours one of the OP/LPs heard something. They came up on the net and asked for some help checking it out. I quickly trooped the perimeter and spotted the Claymores with my binos to make sure they were still kosher and hadn't been fucked with. Then I sent one of my patrol leaders out with a four-man patrol to investigate. When he broke squelch and came up on the platoon push he was laughing. The patrol had spotted two adolescent Korean boys down by the water's edge, butt-ass naked, and vigorously (and quite happily) engaged in a round of alternating bug-gery. After sneaking up on them the troops scared the hell out of the two "butt-bandits." The little homos ran off, leaving their clothes behind.

Some of the troops razzed our KATUSAs (Koreans assigned to U.S. units) about the future ROK general officers they'd just seen. Corporal Lee, B.D. (aka "Leebeedee") nodded approvingly and said, "Yes, Army fuck me, too."

On To North Korea

I took a recon patrol south to "infiltration alley" on the eastside near the ROK sector to cover our designated area of reconnaissance, I split the patrol into two 4man recon teams, I took Vinnie and Reynolds. 18, my cocky little smartass of an RTO. Reynolds looked like a leprechaun with a PRC-77 radio on its back. The fourth man was my pointman, Bob Marnell. Marnell was literally the finest pointman I've seen in combat ops on four continents. We snuck up to the thin piece of rusty barb wire and the battered tin sign denoting the



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Military Demarcation Line (MDL) which split the DMZ and was the actual border between North and South. We were well within the 100-meter stay-away distance (21D regulation) and we were creeping steadily closer. We were going into North Korea, just as we'd planned.

"Look, I'm the patrol leader and I don't think it's such a good idea, said Vinnie. Marnell hid his smirk; Reynolds didn't bother. "Well," I said, while shooting a glare at my RTO, "this is the only time we've had an authorized patrol route over here. This is the only place you can cross and this is the only chance we'll have." But Vinnie still wasn't going for it.

"Okay, you guys go ahead if you want, but we're too close now. Besides somebody in Ouellette could see us."

Okay, so maybe my judgment wasn't the best, busting across the MDL, but it suddenly dawned on me that the reticence I'd noticed on Vinnie's previous patrol wasn't due to inexperience. It was fear. Fear is normal; it's good and healthy, but you don't let it control your actions or allow it to impact on the mission. He wasn't just worried about the North Koreans — he

was sweating division regulations (something the rest of us could have given a fuck about). He was worried about bending a rule even more than he was worried about enemy contact. The rest of us were hoping — hell, we were *praying* for contact. Anything to break the boredom. Besides, that's why we were there.

Reynolds, despite his noisy brava-do in innumerable platoon bull sessions, elected to stay behind. Marnell popped over the MDL with me and we passed my totally unauthorized Canon Sureshot "patrol camera" back and forth.

We returned to the patrol base on schedule and took over patrol base security so another patrol could leave. The third was on its way back. We always had one in, one out, and one incoming. When we had everyone back in after their recons and prior to going out on ambushes we took turns racking out. A few minutes after we returned it began to rain, really rain.

After about five minutes in the steady downpour we were doing the *rainjacket scrunch*; sitting on our heels while we pulled the bottom of our rainjackets over our knees. Our teeth chattered and we occasionally

shivered from the cold. A prior victim of hypothermia, I knew we were still a long way from being in any danger. I wasn't worried about the platoon because most of the troops were better off, laying in their positions, wearing rainjackets, buddied-up and sharing a poncho. Reynolds was curled up in his (and mine) dozing contentedly, a smile on his face while I pulled radio watch for the little shit. Vinnie was not happy. He was really beginning to feel sorry for himself. Hell, this was only his second ambush. Wait 'til he did this every other night for a month or two.

I told Vinnie, "Hell, you're a Ranger, man. Suck it up."

"But I thought it wasn't going to be like this anymore," he whined. Oh, great, I thought.

Another Hudson High grad who chose Infantry because it was supposed to be a quick route to the stars. Didn't think it would be like this anymore? What the hell did he think they were preparing him for in Ranger School? I just looked at him and smiled. "Fuck it. I'm transferring to Military Intelligence," he said. He was totally serious.

Oh, well, better that he and the

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Army found out now. We had enough bogus "leaders of men" strutting around largely concerned with their own self-aggrandizement and career progression (usually at the expense of their troops.) At least Vinnie was honest. This shit was not for him.

Handmike, gripped in a pale white (from the cold) and now water-wrinkled fist, as I walked over to the radio to check the freq. Reynolds, who could be one of the biggest crybabes in the platoon, opened one eye and whispered "Dial 1-800-Whine," then closed it. "At ease, Reynolds," I said in my best platoon leader I-will-be-obeyed growl. (But I couldn't help but smile a little.)

That night my patrol was the last to leave our patrol base. We had a difficult time moving through the thick foliage covering the hilltop and the nearby ravine. It was a moonless night and the rain continued to pour down in a steady stream. The torrential rain, the thick wet foliage, and the lack of any ambient light made our PVS-5 night-vision goggles absolutely worthless.

"Fuck This, I'm [Still] Going To MI."

After the compass and pace men struggled for nearly an hour to stay on the correct azimuth we found the pond had flooded the paddies putting our ambush position under about 5 feet of water. Lieutenant "I'm the Patrol Leader" Vinnie had given up on the decision-making process and life in general, so I set us up in a bunch of "happy mounds" (Korean graves) on some high ground using the tombstones to backstop the Claymores and settled in for a long night. Early in the morning after the rain had subsided I woke up a couple of the troops with the toe of my boot and we moved back off the happy mounds and down to our pickup point. On the way out I said to Vinnie, "Hey, not really a bad night." Again he said, "Fuck this, I'm going MI." He was serious. He made that statement with the total conviction of a man who has seen the light. After the patrol was debriefed I played the game and signed-off on Vinnie's certification and wished him luck ... on his transfer to MI.

With nine months as a platoon leader in the 2ID (his first active-duty assignment), SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent Rob Krott held the record for most duty with troops as a rifle platoon leader. ✕

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Tight Circle Of Warriors

Continued from page 81

time the book was written? The public information about Bacon's CIA history was certainly on the streets in 1976, when ABC Newsman Paul Berry, of Washington, D.C., broadcast a series of stories about Bacon, his CIA record, and his mercenary mission.

Likewise, in 1977, *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine published a lengthy feature article on Bacon and his paramilitary exploits in Laos.

The Cubans, I thought, had to have this information about Bacon not long after his death and while the mercenary trial events were still fresh. The show trial in Angola lasted months. Paul Berry was even kicked out of Luanda trying to film a TV documentary on Bacon and Washingtonian Daniel Gearhart.

What did Valdez and other Cuban journalists or military personnel know, and how might it help relieve the suffering of George's parents, I wondered? At the time, 1996-1997, I was deeply immersed in studying the history of U.S.-Cuban relations, writing an outline for *The Mongoose and the Eagle*, an account of secret wars between Havana and Washington that were waged in the Third World far beyond the Caribbean basin.

In early 1998, I decided to ask the Cubans for permission to go to Havana to interview Valdez, Rojas, the interrogation team from The Zoo, as well as some Cuban POWs I had once befriended during the war in Angola.

Perhaps, I thought, my humanitarian treatment of these Cuban soldiers might qualify me for equal consideration of a humanitarian gesture in return, to help my quest to locate Kayak's burial ground and retrieve his remains.

It was a matter of finding the right person, preferably someone who was once my adversary of the field of battle or in the intelligence game. Among such people, a small, tight circle of warriors — even those once considered the enemy, one can find understanding and honor.

Where there is honor, there can be cooperation. In November 1998, while on assignment for SOF in Havana, I found the man I was looking for, and with him the honor, understanding, and cooperation I had hoped for.

To be continued. In Part III, SOF's Man In Havana tracks down the leads in the heart of Cuba. ❧

Adventure Quartermaster

Continued from page 23

weapons, and they have been in use ever since. Shortly after the War, similar but much lighter bipods came into use to enhance rifle accuracy and since that time have come into nearly universal use for precision shooting. They work, but with the exception of Steyr's built-in "Scout Rifle" bipods, they may or may not be the handiest thing to carry, especially through the bush.

Rather than carry a bipod, asked the designers at Custom Gear Northwest, why not *be your own steady mount*. The old G.I. rifle slings helped a lot, but they only steadied the rifle. CGNW's "Steady Aim Harness" is not a rifle sling, but a shooter sling which you wear that makes you — the primary weapon platform — rock-steady and relaxed, and comfortable. The relaxed part is important when you must sit motionless for extended periods. Long-term comfort is enhanced by a built-in seat cushion, and the sling that encircles the shooter makes sitting in an alert position for extended period virtually effortless.

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Nikon Field Image System MX

Watching in real time, and remembering in explicit detail (via video-taping) has taken a great leap forward with Nikon's new Field Image system. They have mated their excellent field scope with a CCD camera and a color monitor, giving the ability for more than one person to view what's being observed as it happens — plus the ability to concurrently either take color digital stills or a video tape.

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RAFUS ammunition and state in their promotional material this rifle set a world record 5-shot group at 1,004 yards that measured only 5 inches. The amazing thing is with the barrel removed it compresses down into an extremely small package.

Others offering .50 BMG rifles included The Robar Companies, ArmaLite, Inc., and CFI (a law-enforcement and sporting-arms distributor) had multiple .50 BMG rifles on display from manufacturers like Accuracy International, McBros McMillan, and Barrett.

For those wanting a rifle that would be less costly to operate than a .50 BMG rifle, ArmaLite, Inc., had two new semi-auto designs on display. The first is the AR10B which is a semi-auto, but a faithful reproduction of the original ArmaLite AR10 including the cocking spur inside the carrying handle. The second semi-auto rifle ArmaLite unveiled is the AR180B. This newest version of the AR180 utilizes a steel reinforced polymer lower receiver and utilizes the trigger parts of their semi-auto M15 line of rifles.

For those who appreciate the Kalashnikov rifle, Arsenal, is building an American Kalashnikov variant called the SA M-7. It is assembled totally in the United States and is 100% 922.R compliant. (That means you can use high-capacity magazines in it.)

D&S GUNS, is the distributor for another American firm producing semi-auto rifles styled after the pre-ban H&K Model 94. Special Weapons makes several similar looking, but BATF-approved versions of a semi-auto MP5 appearing 9mm and .45 ACP caliber carbine. All of these rifles are semi-auto only and feature 16-inch barrel lengths, even if some of that length is disguised in the form of a fake sound suppressor.

And finally, an interesting tactical lamp for Glocks was found at LiteTek, Inc. Offering 30 lumens of illumination, this tactical lamp mounts to the front of the Glock triggerguard and features a switch that will work with almost any two-hand hold in terms of instantaneous on/off operation.

The SHOT Show will move next year to Las Vegas, Nevada and for many of us that brings out a big sigh of relief. The following year, 2003, it is supposed to travel to Orlando, Florida. Both venues should prove more friendly to the firearms industry and its personnel. ✕



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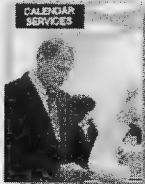
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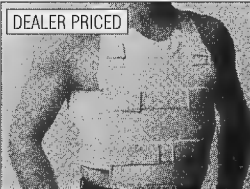
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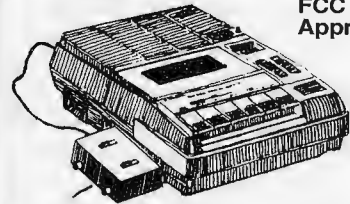
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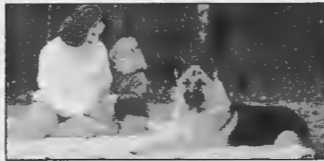
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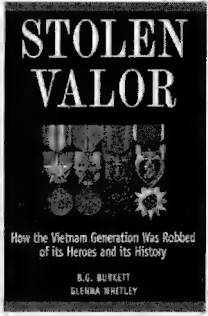
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Basics Before Bells And Whistles

War is in the wind. But you wouldn't know it if you get your news from Brokaw, Jennings and Rather.

Here's the skinny: The Israelis are leaning forward in their foxholes. Their troops are locked and cocked, and their logistical types have been roving the world with checkbooks at high port, buying bombs and bullets aplenty.

Now the U.S.A. is rushing to the rescue:

- All our Scud Busters — Patriot missiles — in U.S. Forces Europe have been quietly deployed from V Corps in Germany to Israel. But while we're providing that troubled country with theater missile-protection, we've left our soldiers stark naked, unable to stop a single Scud.

- Our ground combat forces in Germany — a complete armored corps — have moved out into the field "to train." An insider there says, "Training, hell. We're contingency planning for a fight in the Middle East."

Armies are always contingency planning. So it could be over the top to say we're going to strip Europe of all our warriors and completely take sides in a conflict that might eventually involve weapons of mass destruction — nukes, as well as chemical and biological weapons.

The deployment to Israel of the 69th Air Defense Brigade — complete with all its Chem/Bio protection gear — and V Corps' current war games both began last month on Bill Clinton's watch. The Bush bunch was presented with the problem on 20 Jan. just the way JFK inherited the Bay of Pigs debacle from Ike, and Clinton had the Somali disaster dumped in his lap by Bush the Elder.

Bush the Younger signed-off on the Patriot deployment plan when he gave the 69th the green light to go give the Arabs a live-fire anti-Scud sound-and-light show. Now the nightmare's all his, and we can thank our lucky stars he has Dick Cheney and Colin Powell — who've walked that desert walk — securing his flanks. And ours.

Bush's new Pentagon team has taken over a military that's worn-out — not only materially, but morally. Not



Col. David Hackworth (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.

exactly Desert-Storm-good-to-go, the force is more like a fire department with half of its fire engines sitting on flats while four-alarm fires rage in every direction.

Right now, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is eyeballing a shopping list of missiles, ships, fighters and armored vehicles courtesy of the military-industrial-congressional complex, when his No. 1 priority should be rebuilding our force and fixing or replacing whatever basic stuff it needs the most.

Sure, all this dough's great for some of the heavies who dug deep to put Bush in the saddle. But ordering up more whiz-bang, gold-plated wonder gear — *unworkable* Star Wars missiles, Cold War F-22 fighters, crash-and-burn V-22 helicopters and new armored cars that promise to make the U. S. Army capable of doing what the U. S. Marines already do well — should go on hold.

The new SecDef's first order should be to hammer the nail back in the horse's shoe so we don't lose the horse and eventually the rider. Hopefully Rumsfeld, who comes from the old school of never seeing a

weapon system he didn't want to buy, can steer clear of any big-ticket Cold War-type spending sprees for a while. You know, impose a shopping moratorium on the bells-and-whistles wonder weapons while he tends to the basics.

Warriors who are well-equipped, well-trained and well-led are far more critical to winning battles than most of that ultrahigh-tech, mainly unnecessary stuff on the wish list that's pretty much just more of the same-old; same-old pork for pals at corporate America.

<http://www.hackworth.com> is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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Hackworth's new book, a novel, *The Price of Honor*, is now available. ✕

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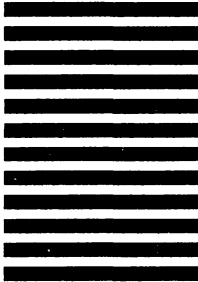
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